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Hierophilos

Dr. H. H. Lake

LETTERS

ON THE

MORAL AND POLITICAL

STATE OF IRELAND.

Entered at Stationers' Hall.

Brit. 247^u

LETTERS
OF
HIEROPHILOS
TO THE
English People,
ON THE
MORAL AND POLITICAL
STATE OF IRELAND,
DEMONSTRATING THE
INEFFICACY OF THE REMEDIES HITHERTO APPLIED
TO ITS EVILS THROUGH THE MEANS OF
BIBLE SOCIETIES.

Οὐ γὰρ κολακουσάντες ὑμᾶς παρὰ τῶνδε γραμμάτων· οὐδὲ πρὸς
χαρὶν ομίλησαντες ἀλλ' ἀπαιτήσαντες κατὰ τὸν ἀκριβῆ καὶ ἐξεταστικὸν
λόγον τὴν κρίσιν ποιήσασθε προσεληλυθώμεν.

Justini pro Christianis Apologia ad Marcum Antoninum, Parisiis, 1636.

“ We have come forward, not for the purpose of flattering you, or procur-
ing your favour by our writings; but that you may pass judgment according
to a fair and accurate standard.”

“ And the book shall be given to one that knoweth no letters; and it
shall be said to him, read: and he shall answer, I know no letters.”—Isaiah,
xxix, 12.

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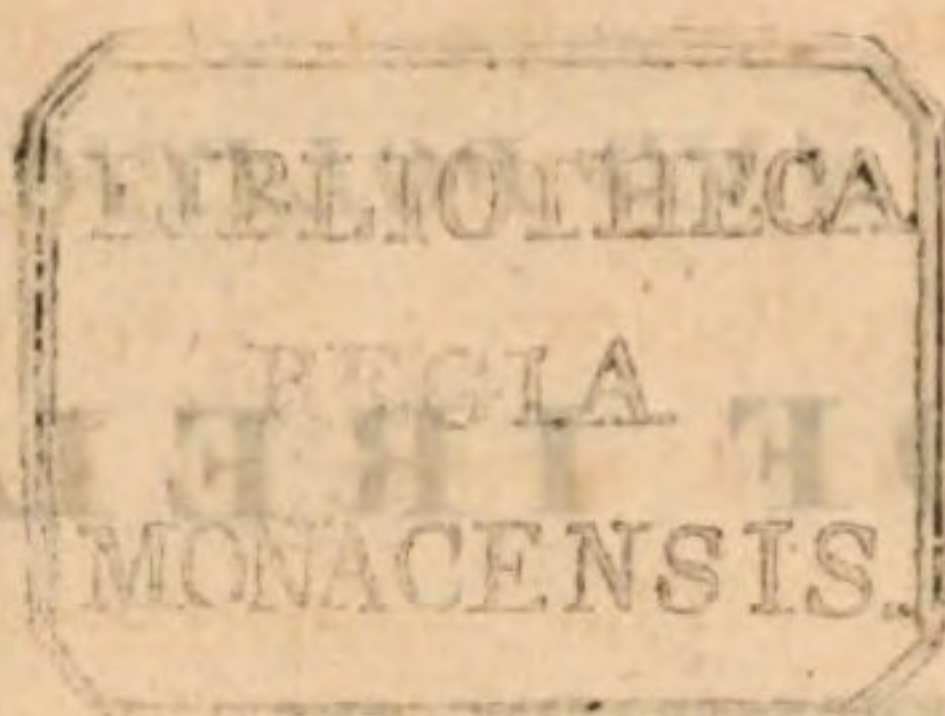
LETTERS

HEROICUS

TO THE

English People

ON THE



STATE OF

INEFFICACY OF THE REMEDIES HITHERTO APPLIED
TO ITS EVILS THROUGH THE MEANS OF

BIBLE SOCIETIES

Of very remarkable nature, and which would appear to be
the result of a systematic and organized system of
propaganda, and the result of a systematic and organized
system of propaganda.

Just as the Christian Church, in its various branches, has
We have come forward, not for the purpose of attacking you, or
ing your system by our writings; but that you may pass judgment according
to a fair and accurate standard.

And the book shall be given to one that knoweth no letters; and it
shall be said to him, read; and he shall answer, I know no letters. — Isaiah
xlii. 12.

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EDITORS' ADVERTISEMENT.

THE interest excited by a perusal of the Letters of Hierophilos first directed the attention of the present Editors to the work they now offer to the English Public. They conceived they should render an acceptable service to their country, by introducing to its notice the elegant compositions of that classic writer, on a subject of just and general importance. The operations of the Bible Society may vary in different countries, but its constitution and avowed objects remain unchanged; and an inquiry into the principles on which it is founded, and the conduct which it has pursued, cannot fail to interest the sympathy or the curiosity of all who advocate or oppose, who venerate or despise the efforts and pretensions of this singular Association. This inquiry has been prosecuted by Hierophilos with a liberality, an eloquence, and a candor, that must reflect the brightest lustre on his virtues and on his talents, which have already received the commendation of an opponent* whose classical pen is an honor to his country and his cause.

The present edition has claims on the British Public, distinct from those which naturally arise from an able and impartial discussion of the principles or the hopes of the Bible Society. The present situation of the Sister

* Bibliophilos, three of whose Letters are inserted in the present Series.

Island is an object of the deepest concern to every humane and enlightened individual of the realm; the Editors, therefore, congratulate themselves and the Empire, on having been able to procure from Hierophilos, a statement of the distressing causes, which have lead the unfortunate peasantry, into those combinations and outrages, which afflict and disgrace the South of Ireland, and a view of the remedies which alone can restore that wretched country to prosperous and permanent tranquillity. The statement has been executed with an ability which the Editors presume will justify the most sanguine anticipations that could have been formed from the published letters of that writer.

TO THE READER.

THE Letters which are now addressed to you have been written with a view of vindicating the character of Ireland from unjust aspersion, and interesting your generosity for her misfortunes. At a period when the concerns of Ireland form such a prominent part of the Speech from the Throne, and are to occupy the collected wisdom of the Legislature, the introduction of such a topic to the British Public cannot be unseasonable or uninteresting. In undertaking this task, my sole object has been to correct misrepresentation, to lay open, with calm and dispassionate temper, the chief sources of our disturbances, and to expose the folly of amusing us, by administering inapplicable remedies, to evils of which the existence and inveteracy are universally acknowledged.

Some of the letters on the Bible Societies have already appeared in Ireland. However, as the evidence of the disease naturally leads to inquire into the fitness of the proposed remedy, and as these Societies have been adverted to, even in the present Parliament, as a powerful engine to affect the amelioration of our condition, the insertion of these letters became necessary for the completion of my plan.

Aware that the intemperance with which national topics have been often discussed by Irishmen, repelled the English Public from giving them due attention, I have adopted a tone of mildness and conciliation. I have

studied to forget those prejudices which have taught the two nations to regard each other with jealousy; and if I have put forward any truths that might offend the *amor patriæ* of some individuals on this side of the water, it is from a conviction that our interests will be better promoted by a spirit of mutual forbearance, than by an assumption of independence which Providence seems to have denied.

During some portion of my discussion on the Bible Societies, I had to contend with one of their acutest and ablest advocates; and now, in taking my leave of him, probably for ever, I feel pleasure in making the acknowledgment, that he has manifested a tone of urbanity and good feeling seldom exhibited in the annals of polemical disputation. In the present degenerate state of our national literature, it was, doubtless, a relief to have met one who has contributed to rescue religious controversy from the imputation of acrimony or dullness, thus proving that the discussion of the most solemn subject that can engage the attention of man, is not incompatible with the exercise of good temper, or the display of elegant acquirements.

Dublin, February 12, 1822.

LETTERS,

&c. &c.

LETTER I.

"Simul veritas plurimis modis infracta: primum inscitia reipublicæ ut alienæ, mox libidini assentandi, aut rursus odio adversus dominantes."—TACITUS.

WHILE the character of our country and the religion of her people are assailed with unsparing enmity, by some interested defamers, who are pouring their calumnies into the English press, and while unfortunately some local outrages of a savage nature give a specious colour to their misrepresentations, your attention is solicited to the statement of a writer, who, with ample opportunities of information, has no interest to mislead; and who, while he exposes the wrongs, and denounces the traducers of his country, is equally ready to acknowledge the extent of her misdeeds, and the indiscretion of her panegyrists. Perhaps, in the history of the world, no two countries have

exhibited such an anomaly as England and Ireland. Notwithstanding the proximity of their situations, which naturally seemed to invite to a cultivation of mutual intimacy, a spirit of sullen distrust has kept them ignorant of each other ; and while the genius of knowledge and of enterprize has annihilated the vast space between England and the Indies, the Irish Channel has been like an impassable gulph, which, from a dread of the enemies on the opposite coast, the spirit of a benevolent curiosity has seldom ventured to explore.

*“ Has autem terras Italique hanc littoris oram
Proxima quæ nostri perfunditur æquoris æstu
Effuge : cuncta malis habitantur mœnia Graiis.”*

We have been occasionally visited by some travellers, or tourists, whose pictures, with few exceptions, are the best evidence of their unwillingness, or their inability, to convey a just delineation of our country and its inhabitants.* Nay,

* The present age furnishes us with many instances of travellers who, with superficial information, affect to pass the most deliberate judgment on the character, politics, and religion of the countries through which they happen to pass. They generalize every thing ; they imagine themselves qualified to judge of a nation by some trait which they have observed in the streets ; they do not give themselves the trouble to obtain information : or, if they do, they are not successful in procuring it, but consider themselves competent to assign motives and causes for every peculiar custom which they observe. The following anecdote will illustrate the truth of these observa-

when the English nation, animated by a laudable curiosity, has sent some individuals to ascertain our characters and our resources, did they not generally return like the twelve spies of Israel, poisoning the public mind by a false representation of the land they had visited, and whose hospitality they had abused? while few were found to possess the honest intrepidity of Caleb and Josue, to brave the public prejudice by a fair and fearless exposure of the truth.

This tone of vehement antipathy has been productive of the worst consequences. The injustice or ingratitude of English writers has produced a spirit of reaction equally injurious to our interests; and our ardent countrymen, stung with the sense of the unmerited aspersions that have been cast upon their country, have drawn on their fervid fancies in portraying the reproachless character of her sons. The description was generally read with distrust; facts of too stubborn a

tions:—"An Ambassador in Italy, who had spent a few days in London, was dining one day at the house of the British Minister at Naples, when he introduced a discussion upon the subject of the British Constitution,—a branch of knowledge very difficult to be understood even by Englishmen who have not made it an object of particular study. The British Minister was about to explain the subject to the company, when the French Ambassador interrupted him by saying: 'Give me leave, Sir, I was twelve days in London, and can explain to you the whole affair.'"—*See Memoirs of a Traveller*, vol. I., London, 1806.

nature seemed to contradict the representation of the impassioned or interested advocate; and thus the whole picture forfeited its claims to fidelity, on account of some exaggerated features. Between these extremes of overcharged eulogy and censure, there is doubtless a large interval; and seldom, it must be confessed, have any been found possessing sufficient candour and discernment to inquire and ascertain the point of their mutual approaches.

To unravel the causes of Ireland's discontent and disturbances, and to resolve the complex subject into the just proportion that each cause may have in their production, would require the intuitive sagacity and painting eloquence of Tacitus. Such a view of the subject would be as foreign to the purpose, as it would be disproportioned to the talents of the present writer: he, therefore, will content himself with demonstrating that, in the present unhappy disturbances that distract some parts of Ireland, there is nothing of disloyalty to the Government; and that the influence of the Catholic religion, instead of fomenting the evil, has been uniformly exercised in mitigating its malignity, and arresting its diffusion.

Besides the opposite description of writers I have just mentioned, there is another class, if the dignity of literature would not be degraded by their assumption of the name; who, instead of

labouring to soften, are perpetually exasperating the causes of national alienation. These unnatural children, wishing to see the country of their birth a prey to intestine discord, because they thrive on its continuance, fling into the dying embers of disunion their ephemeral productions, which perish in the flame of their own creation.

The agitated state of Ireland has been propitious to the production of these extraordinary beings, who have regularly appeared on our stage, transmitting the original spirit with undecayed energy to their lineal successors. The race is not yet extinct: we have still among us some candidates, whose superior claims to the possession of the mantle of their progenitors arise from a rivalry in the work of defamation. Instead of being daunted by the detection of their calumnies, they only gather effrontery from refutation.

"Iram atque animos a crimine sumunt."

Happily, however, their malignity is generally neutralized by their folly or their weakness. They may occasionally excite a smile, but never a more dignified sentiment: their names have passed into terms of scorn and reproach; and they have earned, by their slanders, the just retribution of an infamous celebrity.

LETTER II.

"Non equidem hoc dubites, amborum fœdere certo

"Consentire dies, et ab uno sidere duci."—PERSIUS.

"Sure on both nations the same star has shone,

"Joint are their fates, their destinies are one."

WHATEVER may be the visions of some romantic lovers of country, it is one of the soundest and most incontestible maxims of political science, that there are some countries whose fortunes must ever be obedient to the destinies of others.* This principle which experience has confirmed in the example of other countries, seems peculiarly applicable to the condition of Ireland. To the strength and abundance of her natural resources I feel proud in bearing ample testimony ; but as these must be estimated in relation to the surrounding countries, it must be confessed that she seems to have been destined to be an appendage of the English nation. Though this reflection may be mortifying to our national

* See Grotius, *Des différentes Sortes de Guerre, et de la Souveraineté*, L. i, c. 3; with the notes of his interpreter, Barbeyrac.

vanity, we should still be consoled with the consciousness that we may securely repose under the protection of the British empire, instead of being placed in the doubtful position of Anactorium, which, if we are to credit the account of Thucydides, was disputed by the contending claims of Corinth and Corcyra.

This obvious principle has taken deep root in the Irish mind. The people are too sensible of the advantage of British connexion to wish for a separation. They would consider as their worst enemies, those who would entertain the chimerical project of divorcing that connexion; and the only object they sigh for is, to draw closer its relations, by a fuller participation of its benefits. We know that it is the dispensation of Providence, that one kingdom should be swayed by the wisdom and subject to the authority of another. We know that our fate is connected with that of England, and that in "the peace thereof shall our peace be;" and, therefore, that he who would attempt to seduce the people from their allegiance, would be realizing the language which Jeremias held to the false prophet Hananias, "thou hast broken chains of wood, and thou hast made for them chains of iron."

The principle of dependance on the English Government, which nature seems to suggest, and a sense of self-interest must confirm, derives from

the Catholic faith a still stronger influence. The attachment of the Catholic to the person of his Sovereign is derived from a nobler source than those yet alluded to, and the loyalty he must feel, in common with every other subject, is hallowed by the peculiar instructions of his religion. It is a well-known truth, that the relative duties of sovereigns and of subjects have been discussed in the sister country with a bold, and, perhaps, dangerous freedom of opinion. We know that some of its most eminent political writers have ventured to fix the boundaries where obedience would cease to be an obligation, and resistance would become a duty. These are discussions which, in the Catholic church, are considered as questions of a delicate and dangerous tendency ; nay they have even startled the impiety of Hume.* Seldom are these extreme cases agitated by its

* “ Besides we must consider that as obedience is our duty, in the common course of things, it ought chiefly to be inculcated ; nor can any thing be more preposterous than an anxious care and solicitude in stating all the cases in which resistance may be allowed. In like manner, though a philosopher reasonably acknowledges, in the course of an argument, that the rules of justice may be dispensed with in cases of urgent necessity, what should we think of a preacher or casuist, who should make it his chief study to find out such cases, and enforce them with all the vehemence of argument and eloquence? Would he not be better employed in inculcating the general doctrine, than in displaying the particular exceptions, which we are, perhaps, but too much inclined of ourselves to embrace and to extend !”—
Hume, Essay 13th, on Passive Obedience.

professors, and never proposed to its followers as maxims of practical adoption. We hold with Mr. Burke, that the speculative line of demarcation, where obedience ought to end, and resistance must begin, is faint, obscure, and not easily definable; and that, with or without a right, a revolution will be the very last resource of the thinking and the good. Far, therefore, from entertaining the dangerous theory that would fix the bounds of suffering, which would justify resistance, we are reproached with extending our doctrine of obedience beyond what human nature can endure. Through the vicissitudes of eighteen centuries, the doctrine of the Catholic has remained the same that was preached by St. Paul,*

* "Let every soul be subject to higher powers; for there is no power but from God: and those that are, are ordained of God. Therefore, he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation. Wherefore be subject of necessity, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."—*Romans*, c. 13.

"Christians are aware who has conferred their power on the Emperors;—they know it is God: after whom they are first in rank, and second to none other. From the same source which imparts life they also derive their power. We Christians invoke on all the Emperors the blessings of a long life, a prosperous reign, domestic security, a brave army, a devoted senate, and a moral people."—*Tertullian Apologeticus adversus Gentes*, c. 30.

"Such was the practical commentary of Tertullian on the words of St. Paul, when the Christians suffered from the cruelty of Severus. I know that Paley applies a more accommodating interpretation to the doctrine of the Apostle."—*See Moral Philosophy*, b. 6, c. 4.

and illustrated by the commentaries of Tertullian; and it shall ever be the reproach, or the glory of our religion, that it shall ever be inaccessible to the wisdom or the folly of modern maxims of allegiance. For the loyalty of those which rests on so firm a basis there is little room for apprehension. It is not that fluctuating loyalty which may shift with times and circumstances, and which is measured by the calculating standard of interest or convenience; ours is a loyalty depending on an eternal principle—the dispensation of a ruling Providence; and of which the calls of a capricious self-interest can never annul the obligation.

To any who soberly reflect on the conduct of the Catholics, through the sad vicissitudes of our national history, it must be a matter of surprise, how that conduct could ever have furnished grounds for impeaching their loyalty. With a fidelity which no temptation could shake, they clung to the fallen fortunes of one Prince, until dire necessity had severed every obligation: and surely such heroic constancy, instead of justifying the foul impeachment, ought to be considered a

I must confess, however, that we are so incapable to keep pace with the progress of mind, as to prefer the simple exposition of the African Presbyter, to the adoption of the subtle ingenuity of the English Archdeacon, by which the force of the most rigid obligation, would be soon refined away.

pledge of sincere fidelity to every future Sovereign. The frequent and invidious reference is made to the insurrections which occasionally disgraced our country; they have never sprung from the influence of Catholic principles. Thus in the instance of the rebellion of ninety-eight, of which the memory is industriously transmitted in every Anti-Catholic publication, the leaders of the Irish Directory declared, on examination before the Irish Parliament, that instead of being actuated by the desire of establishing the Catholic religion, they would have gladly exchanged the cross for the crescent. On this subject much adverse learning has been expended; and notwithstanding the many able vindications of our conduct that have been occasionally offered to the public, yet there are some drivelling writers, who are ever pouring upon the English ear the obsolete calumnies of men deservedly forgotten; and who in the dull round of slander exhibit all the dexterity of the Athenian charioteer, who could perpetually revolve round the same course, without deviating from the former track or marking a new impression.

Metaphysicians displayed much idle cavil in attempting to prove the impossibility of civil allegiance, when spiritual obedience was exacted by the Roman Pontiff. Our feelings and our conduct refuted their subtle speculations. To put

an end, however, to the interminable contest, the King graciously became our advocate, and a single ray of royal benevolence has dissolved the rusty prejudices, which have resisted the weight and vigour of arguments an hundred times repeated. In spite of the calumnies of ages, and the misgivings of some individuals, who distrusted, or affected to distrust, our allegiance. He resolves to come among us : the most distant parts of the kingdom pour in their thronging multitudes to greet his approach. With unhesitating confidence he generously flung himself on the fidelity of his Irish people ; and surely it was a glorious spectacle to have seen him borne aloft on their buoyancy.

His parting address spoke in language that will long be remembered, and has made an impression which will not easily be effaced. The interposition of a cold and opaque body, intercepted for some time the light and heat of the royal Luminary. But he again beams on our country through the medium of a Viceroy—who, while he adequately sustains the represented Majesty of the throne, most faithfully reflects the kind feelings of our benevolent monarch. We shall, therefore, be content that a host of noxious writers tax us with disloyalty, while we are conscious that the Royal mind has received a different impression. If, therefore, when the Government was known

to the Catholics only through the severities it inflicted, they cherished a strong and steady loyalty, which no force could pluck out of their breasts, they cannot be disaffected to a Government which cherishes and protects them, unless we suppose their loyalty to be like the famous tree in Switzerland,* which thrives on the barren rock, exposed to the tempest, but withers and dies under a kinder cultivation.

* Tanim.

LETTER III.

“ My virtue is weakened through poverty.—I am become a reproach among all my enemies, and very much to my neighbours; and a fear to my acquaintance.”—*Psalm 30.*

To the readers of this Letter, on our side of the Irish Channel, it will undoubtedly be a subject of astonishment that I should devote any labour, which to them will appear superfluous, in vindicating the conduct of persons whose eminent services are justly entitled to the public approbation. As the nature of an apology may possibly imply the suspicion of guilt, some will, perhaps, feel indignant at the indiscretion of an advocate who attempts to justify a body of men, whose characters are equally above the reach of reproach, or justification. However, it must be recollected that I write for an English public; a public, whose honest minds have been misled by continued calumnies acting on their religious prejudices; and that a vindication of our clergy, offered to a Protestant public, can no more be an imputation on their deserts, than the apologies of Justin or Athanasius could justify the impeachment of the conduct of the first Christians.

It is only by fairly estimating the different causes of discontent which operate on the minds of the Irish peasantry, that we shall be able to appreciate the merits of the Catholic priesthood. Although the advocacy of the people is generally considered an invidious topic, it must be confessed that the Irish peasant is subject to privations which are not felt by the lower classes of any other country in Europe. This is a matter of notoriety; and the extreme wretchedness of their condition has often furnished a pathetic theme for exciting barren commiseration. I shall not speak of his exclusion from the benefits of the Constitution, nor of the mode in which his prospects are clouded by the influence of the penal laws; these are grievances of too refined a nature to affect the feelings of a people, too depressed to be mortified by exclusion from such exalted honours: I shall merely confine myself to the privation of those more immediate necessities—food and clothing, which is generally associated with demoralizing habits. But as an entire Letter shall be devoted to this ungrateful subject, I will immediately pass to the vindication of the clergy.

In the discharge of the sacred duties of their profession, the Catholic priesthood are assiduous and unremitting: their ministry brings consolation to the sick and the indigent; the administration of the sacraments occupies a large portion of

their attention, and the remainder of their time is devoted to the instruction of those whose humble condition in life has debarred them from every other source of moral and religious improvement. When we reflect on the wide extent of the spiritual jurisdiction of the Catholic priest, and the large mass of ignorance and misery to be controlled almost solely by his influence,—though we may deplore the occasional outrages that disgrace our country, yet candour will acknowledge that, were it not for his exertions, they would be still more frequent and atrocious. If I did not dread to fatigue my readers' patience by frequent and minute references to facts, I could illustrate every sentence of this Letter by cogent examples.

The men of rank and station in the country have borne repeated and honourable testimony to the meritorious services of the Catholic clergy. When the English public read the reports of speeches pronounced in the Senate by Irish Members, expressing alarm at the progress, and denouncing the dangers of the Catholic religion, they are naturally persuaded that these vivid impressions are caught from a closer contact with the clergy of that persuasion: but their mistake may be corrected when they learn that some of these gentlemen are, in private life, their attached friends and best benefactors! I could name individuals among the opponents of Catholic claims,

who have given donations to Catholic clergymen, as a grateful testimony of their salutary influence : thus evincing an anxiety to expiate their public opposition by acts of private benevolence.

Of their indefatigable exertions, in softening the evils that afflicted Ireland during the progress of the epidemic of 1817, I could quote abundant testimonies. I shall content myself, however, with citing the approving attestation of our late secretary. In his speech before the British Senate, he paid a just and well-earned tribute to their worth, in which there was little danger that the vigorous fancy and warm feelings of this enlightened statesman could have been hurried beyond the boundaries of truth. Though his memory teemed with facts of heroic devotion, yet, like the venerable father of poetry, he singles out a solitary example where a clergyman, unable to receive the confession of two dying people without the evident peril of his life, generously threw himself into the very focus of contagion, content to inhale the poison of death, provided he administered to the wretched sufferers the medicine of immortality.

The unfortunate individuals who disgrace their religion, and disturb the peace of the public by the spirit of outrage and violence, are sure to release themselves first from the dread of the authority of the clergy. While the priest holds the

ascendant over their minds, they are amenable to law and order ; and never do they trample on the civil authority until they first learn to disregard his spiritual denunciations. Do those who take a lead in the disturbances that unhappily disturb the south of Ireland endeavour to enlist, in their support, the authority of the priesthood?—No. Their exhortations to peace and patience are sometimes repaid with menaces of the same harsh treatment which is indiscriminately inflicted on the Protestant and Catholic laity ; nor can it be supposed that those who would wantonly outrage the sacred person of the minister of God, would kneel at his tribunal to invoke his benediction.

Among the other instances of clerical zeal recorded in our public journals, it is mentioned that some of those turbulent individuals, irritated by the severe but wholesome admonitions of their pastor, endeavoured to intimidate him into a dereliction of his duty. But he, like the venerable Eleazar, “ began to consider the dignity of his age, and his ancient years, and the inbred honour of his grey head, and his good life and conversation from a child : and he answered without delay according to the ordinances of the holy law made by God, saying that he would rather be sent into the other world.” Thus the priests preach peace, and they are accused of sedition : they are taxed with apathy in repressing outrage, of which, be-

cause they are zealous to check them, they are threatened to become the victims.

If their precepts were listened to with respect, and followed up by a corresponding line of conduct, the country would soon assume another aspect, and the spirit of discord would disappear. They still continue to be the preachers of that doctrine, whose salutary influence on the peace and happiness of society is conveyed in the feeling apostrophe of St. Augustin to the Catholic Church: " By you the young, the adult, and the old are taught the respective duties of their age and condition. By you the wife is connected with the husband, in the bond of affection chastened by virtue, and subjected to his person by a controul mitigated by religion. Through you the father and the child, exercise the reciprocal relations of filial obedience exalted into piety, and paternal authority softened into love. Through you the ties of kindred and of blood are more closely knitted together by the hallowed influence of charity. Through you the servant forgets the hardships of his condition, and converts into a willing duty the servitude which necessity first imposed. Through you the master relaxes his dominion, while he is taught to conciliate by kindness those whom nature has subjected to his controul. It is you that connect citizens in the bonds of concord, spreading the affections of

consanguinity over the different families of the human race, by the recollection of a common origin. *Thou* teachest kings to watch over the welfare of the people, and the people to bow to the majesty of kings. And through all the gradations in society, it is *thou* that teachest who are the objects of fear, of affection, of respect, of punishment, of consolation, of reproof and of correction; impressing on our minds, that while these must be apportioned to different individuals, **ALL** are to be the objects of our charity, and **NONE** of our resentment."

HIEROPHILOS.

LETTER IV.

"We are reviled, and we bless :—we are ill spoken of, and we intreat."

St. Paul.

HAVING vindicated the people from the charge of disloyalty, and the clergy from the imputation of supineness, or connivance at their excesses ; I shall undertake briefly to explain the most prominent causes of the discontent and outrages of the peasantry. The principal sources from which these evils spring are wretchedness ; often destitute of the necessaries of life, and a spirit of discord engendered by the political situation of the country, and aggravated by the insidious designs of individuals interested in perpetuating disunion.

That the lower orders of our people are wretched beyond the condition of any other peasantry, is confessed by the testimony of every intelligent traveller. The causes of this extreme misery it is unnecessary to explore : but it must be acknowledged that it has been considerably heightened by the late political changes, which have affected the condition of the other classes of society throughout the empire.

Many estates were out of lease during the fervor of war prices ; the increase of his rent-roll multiplied the expensive habits of the landlord ; and, notwithstanding the depression which renders it impossible for the tenant to meet the demands of his landlord, yet the latter insists on the full payment of his rents with inexorable severity. To satisfy these rigorous claims, industry is often strained to a painful yet unprofitable exertion. The farmer finds that the stimulus which he gives to his industry, in order to acquit his obligations to his landlord, has the opposite effect of increasing the demand upon his tithes.

This is a delicate subject, which has long continued a topic of angry discussion in this country. As it is still considered a sore and sensitive evil, both as it affects the clergy and the people, and which cannot be touched but with a trembling hand, I shall leave this important question to the wisdom of professed politicians.* One thing, however, is certain, that the multiplicity of pecuniary demands upon his labour, which, after having exhausted every expedient of inge-

* See on this subject the judicious observations of Sir John Sinclair : Code of Agriculture, p. 64, 3d edition, London.

After some pertinent reflections on the subject of tythes, the Scotch Baronet quotes the expressions of Mr. Burrowes, a gentleman to whom the Irish public is indebted for many valuable communications on agricultural subjects.

nuity, he is unable to meet, has the effect of relaxing the industry of the farmer,* and throwing him into a gloomy despondence.

This is an obvious source of discontent: for how can he view his landlord with feelings of kindness, who, after bringing to the market all the produce of his land not necessary for his own consumption, beholds the rest seized for arrears of rent and tithes; and himself and his family cast out as aliens on the world, depending on the precarious bounty of persons almost reduced to the same level. When the fruit of labour is not equivalent to the demands on the produce of the soil, the people must necessarily be discontented. Though I have spoken of persons bringing to market what is not necessary for home consumption, it may be expedient to inform the English reader what is the idea which the Irish peasant attaches to *necessaries*. By that word he neither understands bread, nor beef, nor warm clothing, nor comfortable lodging: these he must exclude from his ideas of contentment; these are seldom compatible with his speculations on taking his little *farm*: happy if, after discharging the accumulated demands of rents, and taxes of every

* As the same word is susceptible of a variety of meanings, it will appear that a different meaning is ascribed to the word *farmer* here from what it assumes in England.

description, he is able to furnish his wretched family with the humble fare, proverbially Irish, —the Potatoe.

Should the extensive proprietors of land, influenced by benevolence or policy, make some abatement, the benefit seldom reaches the immediate cultivators of the soil. In Ireland, the great landholders seldom come in contact with the humble tenantry; they are kept at a sullen and distrustful distance from each other by a series of individuals, who have obtained from their intermediate situation the appropriate name of *middle men*. These gentlemen, too, must be supported out of the produce of the land, thus weighing down the peasantry with the burthen of rank, without imparting to them any of its benefits. Too proud to exercise any industry, yet too far removed from refined intercourse to possess the influence which generally attaches to exalted station, they are known to the people only in displaying a vulgar insolence, imitating the vices of the great without any of their correctives; thus proving themselves noxious members of society, by keeping the higher and lower orders at an inapproachable distance, and intercepting the complaints of the one and the bounty of the others. These larger weeds, which absorb so much of its nutriment, should be suffered silently to decay,

in order to restore health and vigour to the humbler and more useful plants of the soil.

Even those who possess large estates, experience at last the effects of the general poverty that overspreads the country.

"Non sibi sed Domino gravis est quæ servit egestas."

The continued absence of the men of property from the country is also an acknowledged grievance, which has not escaped the attention of some of the wisest Legislators. A constant residence of the rich in Ireland is, under existing circumstances, a hopeless wish.*

A continued absence cannot, however, be excused, as it is reasonable to expect that, in return for their ample incomes, they would occasionally diffuse through the extremities some of the improvements and elegance of the capital. Their absence has a positive and negative effect, in deteriorating the condition of the people.

A negative effect, as their occasional residence might tend to civilize the habits, and cement the attachment of the lower orders. A positive effect,

* The seat of empire must be the centre which will ever attract a confluence of opulence and fashion; and we cannot, therefore, be surprised at the comparative solitude of the Irish capital, when we reflect that neither the magic of the name of Rome, nor the dignity which age and conquest had thrown around her, could arrest the tide of emigration which followed Constantine to Byzantium; leaving the parent city of the seven hills to deplore her desolation.

as the desertion of their mansions and the neglect of their domains, are the causes of consigning to indolence the numerous hands that would procure labour and subsistence from their improvement. As no large capitals are embarked in manufactures through the country, hence no common centre to guide the erring intellects, which, if fixed to steady habits of industry, would contribute to augment the national prosperity. Thus the great mass of the peasantry is exposed, without a corrective but that of religion, to the complicated evils which must spring from extreme indigence and ignorance.

To the sober-minded English, this picture may seem to be drawn by an ardent apologist, who has industriously exaggerated the misery of the Irish people. In the delineation I have not brought to my aid any ideal colouring; but, with the most subdued and dispassionate tone I have not gone as far I might be authorized by facts. The instances of extreme wretchedness which might be collected from the body of our peasantry are such as no description could exaggerate, and no fancy overcharge.

When Cicero pleaded the cause of the injured Sicilians, and denounced the crimes of those who were the authors of their wrongs; he did not waste his time in idle declamation, nor in the vague description of injuries which could convey no

distinct idea of their extent or their magnitude; but, like a true master of eloquence, he flings away the subordinate draperies of fancy, and interests the sympathy of the Roman people for his clients, by exhibiting to their view the naked victims of that misrule on which he invoked the retribution of their justice.

And could not I exhibit to the indignant compassion of the English people, evidence equally affecting of the miseries I describe? I do not, I cannot make any allusion to the Government, whose wisdom and clemency I must, in common with every good man, applaud, and whose influence could not, perhaps, reach the source of those evils. For

“Of all the varied ills which men endure,

“How few that Kings can cause, or Kings can cure!”

But could I not exhibit to the view of the English people many an unfeeling little ruler, through the periodical crowds of Irish labourers who cross the Irish Channel, stowed almost to suffocation, in order to procure subsistence by hard labour, and to restore that life which, for want of wholesome nutriment at home, had almost expired out of their emaciated frames? To uphold in a foreign land a style of living disproportioned to their incomes, some scruple not to sacrifice the comfort and enjoyment of

thousands ; and when these unfeeling men happen to meet these living spectres gliding through the streets of London, like Ulysses, on encountering the indignant shade of Ajax, they must sustain the reproachful glances of the wretched beings whose happiness they have murdered. The apology often pleaded by the absentees is, the danger of residing in a country where their persons and properties would be continually exposed. They ought, however, to consider that fear, like affection, is generally reflective ; that, perhaps, they are the first to inspire the terror which they feel, and that within their miniature dominion, they might apply to themselves the observation of the Roman sage,

“ Qui sceptræ sævus imperio regit

“ Timet timentes, metus in auctorem redit.”

This reflection is justified by the pleasing contrast of some noblemen, who have resisted the contagion of vanity and fashion, and reside in tranquil security on their estates, diffusing among their tenantry the blessings of their wealth and example. The traveller, in passing through the country, finds occasional relief amidst the contemplation of uniform wretchedness. On approaching the residence of those individuals, you immediately perceive the influence of intellect and benevolence that reigns within the happy

circle ; and your feelings, sickened by the surrounding scene, here find a grateful repose. From within the sphere of their beneficial sway discontent is banished ; and should disaffection attempt to cross the forbidden boundary, it dies in the unpropitious atmosphere. Among those whom I could name on the present occasion, I shall content myself with adverting to one individual, who measures his superiority in rank by the superiority of his public virtue ; diffusing his wealth over a contented and tranquil neighbourhood ; enjoying the happiness which he communicates ; and standing the foremost in his country, as much by the unostentatious display of a practical patriotism, as he does by the splendour of his title, and the “ thick honors ” of a long and illustrious ancestry.

While I expose the causes of the discontent of our peasantry, let it not be imagined that I am the advocate of that discontent, or the apologist of their crimes. Were I to address the people, instead of irritating their sense of suffering, I should endeavour to soothe them to patience in the meek and Christian language of St. Peter, “ Be ye subject, therefore, to every human creature for God’s sake : whether it be to the King as excelling, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of the good : For so is the will of God,

that by doing well you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.....For this is thanks-worthy, if for conscience towards God, a man endures sorrows, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if committing sin, and buffeted *for it*, you endure? But if doing well you suffer patiently, this is thanks-worthy before God."

However I may lament the extreme poverty of our people, I must confess that language would not sustain my efforts to convey my abhorrence of some atrocities that have been committed.* No

* While I express a just horror at the outrages of some of the peasantry, it is only justice to the public to state, that the odium might be divided with some who affect a zeal for the public interest. These outrages, cruel as they are, are much exaggerated. The English people may form a proper estimate of our Irish journals, when they learn that I have now before me a journal, which heads a paragraph by the appalling title of "Dreadful Murder committed by the Insurgents;" and, strange to say, not a vestige of a murder is discoverable through the entire paragraph. This gazette is, by way of *lucus a non lucendo*, called *the Patriot*. That I may not be reproached with vague reference, the article to which I allude is found in the paper of the 31st of January. The artifice was not without its object. Conscious that few would enter into the *penetralia* of his composition, he wished to produce a powerful effect by a dreadful frontispiece. In looking for these murderers, you only discover the breaking down of a bridge, which to the imagination of this gazetteer was transformed into murder, as the windmills were metamorphosed into giants by the Prince of Chivalry.

For a similar purpose, this same paper inserted a story about some persons being murdered for refusing to comply with a certain ceremony, which, of course, he was afterwards obliged to contradict.

provocation could extenuate these outrages; they were inspired by a more malignant principle than the mere importunity of distress. Their authors, if you will, were monsters whom human nature indignantly disowns; but, for God's sake, let not the misdeeds of these miscreants, by a constructive imputation, be visited on the whole people.

At all events, it is acknowledged, even by those who are not favourable to the national character,

These insertions and retractations are not, however, without their end, as the editors well know that the first story will be circulated, and make a due impression, where the contradiction will never reach.

Ex uno disce omnes.

To convey to the English reader an idea of the humanity of some of our Irish gentry, it will be sufficient to observe, that there are individuals who associate their exertions in preserving the peace with their sportful amusements. It is a literal fact, that on the evenings of some of the most tragic days that disgrace our country, these individuals express their horror of shedding human blood by the savage facetiousness of "a fine day's grouching." In the absence of men of rank, and influence, and integrity, the preservation of the peace is necessarily entrusted to men who are unfit organs to convey the spirit of the laws, and who often trade on their violation.

The dispatches of our Viceroy shew that the people may be the dupes of systems, of which the origin is not ascertained. He mentions that illegal oaths are now administered in the county of Down, which proceed from a committee in Dublin. Would to God that all the illegal associations were traced to their source: it *would then* be discovered that the people are often actuated by an impulse of which they know not the cause; and that their acts, however irregular, might converge to one common centre.

that there is in the Irish people an easy susceptibility of kindness or of resentment ; it is, therefore, policy as well as wisdom to refine the ductile materials. They are ardent, enthusiastic, and impetuous ; they possess those qualities of nature which, if improved, are the greatest ornaments of a people, and which, when neglected, are capable of producing the worst effects.

Instead, then, of aggravating the defects of the national character by harsh treatment, is it not the duty of those who value the interest of the country to correct them, by a kind and conciliatory demeanor ? The face of the country would soon be changed, and all would soon feel the happy effects resulting from mildness towards a peasantry, who, under kind treatment, are capable of the most lasting and faithful attachment ; and who rush into such excesses when outraged by cruelty, and stimulated by the direful impulse of revenge.

HIEROPHILOS.

LETTER V.

“ Inter finitimos vetus atque antiqua simultas

“ Immortale odium et nunquam sanabile vulnus

“ Ardet adhuc:” — JUVENAL.

“ With us still burns the old undying rage

“ Of direful discord, unsubdued by age.”

To the other causes of irritation which work upon the feelings of the Irish peasantry, is unfortunately added the influence of religious bigotry. Religion has been often made a pretext for the worst purposes; and, under the sanction of her name, deeds have been perpetrated which would dishonour human nature. Her sacred character has been thus exposed to the derision of her enemies; and the infidel triumphed in detailing the ludicrous or tragic story of her follies or of her crimes.

In no country have the bad effects of this religious bigotry been more visible than in Ireland; and in no country has hypocrisy oftener worn the sacred mask of zeal for religion. The severe laws that have been enacted with fresh rigor under

every succeeding branch of the House of Stewart, have drawn a sharp and sullen line of demarkation between the inhabitants of the same country. Some saw themselves stript of their fortunes, because they inherited the faith of their ancestors; and others found that the profession of a new creed smoothed the access to emolument and honour.

Where difference of religion was productive of such an inequality of condition, there must have been some symptoms of discontent; and some angry collisions between both parties, embittered by the sense of unmerited humiliation on the one hand, and by the insolence of the ascendant party on the other. As Religion was the distinctive mark that separated these two casts of people, religion was unfortunately mixed up with politics; and every aggression, however, originating in other motives, was traced to the spirit, and embittered by the feelings of religious rancour.

The memory of ancient wrongs was industriously kept alive, and members of the same community unfortunately visited on each other the crimes and follies of their ancestors, to the third and fourth generation. Such an unnatural state of society must necessarily have arrested the progress of civilization and improvement. The inhabitants of this kingdom, instead of being blended into one harmonious mass, by the all-

pervading influence of equal laws, were kept in a state of reciprocal repulsion ; and all the evils of clanship and of the feudal system, aggravated by the policy that was adopted, operated with a powerful and destructive energy.

There is not a country under heaven that has not been occasionally visited by war, and that has not passed under the dominion of successive masters ; yet in the lapse of a few years every vestige of the revolution is effaced ; the memory of ancient feuds is forgotten, and the shattered frame of society is soon restored to its former vigour. But here, alas ! it would seem as if some malignant spirit were bent on perpetuating our woes, by refreshing the memory of the obsolete crimes of the old inhabitants.

The existence of party associations in this country has been a subject of just and strong reprobation. They have tended to retard the national prosperity, and to insult the national feeling. It is a melancholy truth that the exhibition of any colours, however harmless in themselves, is calculated to produce irritation, when these colours are displayed as symbols of the triumph of one party, and the degradation of the other.

When a band of men, inflamed with wine and insolence, disgrace the nightly revel with senti-

ments, mortifying to the pride of the people, and exhibit in wanton triumph the badges of their defeat, they are roused to a dangerous activity feelings, which would have slept in forgetfulness. Often has the peace of the community been troubled by the insulting display of these symbols of discord, and a passive population stimulated by aggression to a dreadful retaliation. Happy, were these accursed distinctions ever banished from the land. We would then be spared the recital of many a tale, which is a blot on the page of our history.

Let us only figure to ourselves (and the picture is only a feeble transcript of the sad reality) a knot of men of rough and ferocious manners, breathing a spirit of rancour against those who differ from them in religious opinions; swelled with the insolence natural to the favoured cast, flushed with intoxicating liquors, and almost maddened with martial music, parading through an unarmed multitude, irritating their feelings by party tunes, accompanied with appropriate gesticulations, and panting for the slightest opportunity of insult and revenge. Is it not morally impossible, that amidst the numerous mass there would not be found some fiery materials to kindle at such repeated provocations? A fray ensues—the murderous weapons are unsheathed,—

and the innocent and the guilty are the indiscriminate victims.

..... *Sed jurgia prima sonare*

Incipiunt animis ardentibus ; hæc tuba rixæ

Ludere se credunt ipsi tamen, et pueriles

Exercere acies, quod nulla cadavera calcent.

The friends of the fallen brood over their wrongs, cherishing in gloomy silence an unconquerable resentment.

A secret enmity thus rankles in the breast ; the deadly purpose is perhaps entrusted to some confidential bosom—the infliction of revenge only provokes to fresh retaliation ; and thus a spirit of hostility incessantly reverberating, is kept up between the contending factions. What a pity that the causes of so demoralizing a system should not for ever be eradicated from the bosom of the country ? The sources of her disunion and weakness would be removed ; and all the members of the state would be united in one effective body.

It is astonishing what effect the liberality of the last reign has had, in drawing closer the ties of union, and improving the condition of Ireland. In proportion as the badges of servitude disappeared, the visions of a distempered patriotism vanished ; and those who hitherto fed their fancies with the gloomy phantoms of the past, are now pushing forward in the honourable compe-

tition of dignity and wealth. In proportion as the obstructions which intercepted their prospects have been removed, and a field has been opened to the profitable display of talent, our speakers cease to waste their precious time in inflaming the discontent of others, by communicating the contagion of their own.

In concluding this painful topic, I am cheered by the contrast which presents itself in the recollection of the parting injunction of our beloved Sovereign. He came among us—he witnessed our ardent and instinctive generosity; and, conscious that the spirit of discord alone could poison such precious qualities, his farewell admonition breathed peace and conciliation. The impulse was felt and circulated, and every string that was susceptible of a fine movement was, under the touch of his master-hand, immediately attuned to harmony.

There have been, however, some individuals who have endeavoured to frustrate his Majesty's mandate, and to perpetuate dissention, because they thrive by the monopoly of *the few* and the exclusion of *the many*.* However strong the

* It was the indignant saying of Dr. Johnson, who was neither partial to Ireland nor hostile to the Government, "The Irish are in a most unnatural state, for there we see the minority prevailing over the majority. There is no instance, even in the ten persecutions, of such severity as that which has been exercised over the Catholics of Ireland."

impulse, and however general the diffusion of the spirit of conciliation, there are still some minds which it has not yet approached. This, however, ought not to excite our wonder, for though the Sun of liberality may traverse the earth, it requires a certain elevation, to be visited by its light and warmed by its influence.

Notwithstanding these exceptions, the Royal example has had a strong influence, in cementing those ties which before were but loosely held together. The system of conciliation will, it is to be hoped, be followed up; and it only requires its completion to give full play to the energies of Ireland, and to enlist in support of the national strength those talents, which are either wasted in indolence or neutralized by distraction.

HIEROPHILOS.

LETTER VI.

..... *Mutato nomine, de te*

Fabula narratur. HORACE.

“ Change but the name, of thee the tale is told.”

THE existence of much misery in Ireland has been universally acknowledged. The wretched condition of its population has almost passed into a phrase of compassion or reproach, and has exercised, of late, the speculations of benevolence. It was the interest of those who were aware of their genuine cause, to ascribe all the calamities of the people to religious ignorance. Religious blindness, it was said, was the prolific source of all their crimes; the complaint was re-echoed in the sister-country with sincere or affected commiseration; and so contagious was the sensibility, that a pathetic description of our spiritual woes was considered the surest indication of piety and eloquence.

The infection was not confined to the professed advocates of the Bible, it seized the colder breasts of the literary censors of the age; and they, too, occasionally condescended to swell the chorus of lamentations, that were pathetically poured over

the superstitions of Ireland. The generous minds of the English people were filled with compassion for our lot, the wealth of the opulent and the zeal of the religious were immediately put in requisition, and a vast importation of Bibles has been conveyed into the country, to satisfy the hunger of scriptural knowledge under which Ireland laboured for centuries. The people unprepared for this vast collection of spiritual light, were overpowered by its intense and sudden influence. The Bible seemed to be an exotic which could not thrive in the Irish soil, and hence, perhaps, the tame and uniform appearance of the kingdom, not chequered by the agreeable variety of sects, which diversify with all the fantastic shades of colour the prospect of the sister-country.

The reluctance and distrust with which the boon was received, and the disdain with which it was generally rejected, served only to inflame the indignation of the societies, and aggravate the charges against the incurable depravity of the Irish character. In the gradations of its climax, their eloquence soon rose from the people to the Catholic clergy; and to their perverse desire of perpetuating their own reign, which cannot be separated from ignorance, they failed not to ascribe the degradation of the people. It is difficult to convey an adequate idea of the arrogance

of invective in which the pious missionaries generally indulged. The press teemed with their complaints, their meetings rung with their noisy declamation; and little tracts, brought down to the purchase of the poorest, fraught with the most Godly denunciations against the domination of our priests, were circulated with a mischievous activity.

To check the career of the Gospellers, to vindicate our clergy against unmerited aspersion, and to justify the line of conduct adopted by them, was the first object of Hierophilos. On the sincere believers of Christianity I wished to impress the irreligious consequences with which the system was pregnant; and to those who felt a zeal for the public welfare I was anxious to point out the impolicy of irritating a whole people, who feel the strongest suspicions that some treacherous hostility is meditated against their religion.

Our long silence was abused by their presumption; and a forbearance, dictated by discretion, they failed not to attribute to the weakness of our cause.

“ I had not thought to have unlocked my lips

“ In this unhallowed cause, but that these jugglers

“ Would think to charm our judgment as our eyes;

“ Obtruding false rules frank'd in reason's garb.

“ I hate when vice can bolt her arguments,

“ And virtue has no tongue to check her pride.”

A defence, after such long silence, disconcerted the plan of the societies. The exposure of their designs alarmed their apprehensions, and I was accordingly saluted with the courteous, but bold defiance of an adversary, who laboured to enlist in their support the combined authorities of the Scriptures and the Fathers. In the necessity I was under of following his footsteps, and of replying to his arguments, or unmasking his sophistry, the controversy expanded beyond my original intention, by embracing those general principles of Church government, and the exercise of private judgment, which are applicable alike to all times and countries.

The following letters, then, though distinguished by some national peculiarities, have an equal reference to the Bible Societies of England; and these societies cannot be proved noxious here, without shewing that they are no less prejudicial to the interests of the whole empire. Since the publication of the letters of Hierophilos in Ireland, a silent reformation has been working in the Bible Societies. If their emissaries are still active, their activity is less ostentatious; if they are warm in their invectives, they are less ambitious to court notoriety; their appeals to the public are more temperate and subdued, and the puritanical moroseness of their zeal has been

gradually softened by a gentle mixture of the language of polished life.*

They are still continuing to apply the remedy of the Bible to our distempered country; but in vain: her malady is of a less spiritual nature; and, therefore, requires a different process to restore her to healthy habits. Too long have our people been doomed to drink of the waters of bitterness; and though it might have been imagined by some honest enthusiasts that the Bible, like the mystic tree of Moses, would sweeten their acerbity, experience has attested that it has only served to render them still more acrid and corrosive.

HIEROPHILOS.

* The meeting of the Kildare Street Society, which was long since advertized, without its adjournment being equally known, was held, at length, after a tedious prorogation. After going through the usual round of its former resolutions, unmitigated by the least infusion of liberality, the anniversary oration was repeated by one of its former advocates. I shall not quote the celebrated passage of Junius, to weaken the effect of a defence made by an individual, the happy pliancy of whose profession might retain him with equal indifference on the opposite side of the question. But as he seems to love the Bible, I will beg leave to remind him, that it is impossible to serve two masters. Those whose services are seldom solicited at the bar, may well turn over to the more lucrative advocacy of the Bible. But for Mr. North, whose eye is doubtless fixed on the highest honours of his profession: he ought to reflect that such is the keen competition of the age, that even genius is doomed to labour, and that, therefore, should he continue to distract his studies between the *law* and the *prophets*, by risking the dignities of the one he will surely diminish the lustre of his fame, though by his attention to the other he may be securing an accession to his fortune.

LETTER VII.

Θυμοδακνῆς γὰρ μυθός.—ODYSSEY.

For slander stings the soul.—POPE.

IN a late number of the Dublin Journal, which came into my hands, I observed some critical strictures on the lives and writings of our celebrated historians, Hume and Gibbon. I cast my eye over the article, rather with a view to amuse myself, than with a hope of extracting much information from that writer's criticism. I considered it as one of those tasteless articles, which the barrenness of his materials obliges him sometimes to insert; such was his dull extracts on the feats of Knight Errantry, in which he must have imagined that his readers had returned to the days of boyhood, as the insipidity of the grotesque adventures was not relieved by one particle of skill in the plan, or elegance in the composition of the story. If the writer had contented himself with filling the chasms of his Journal with articles merely uninteresting, I should only smile at his imbecility; but when they have generally

for object the aspersion of a large and respectable portion of society, then our pity for his weakness is warmed into indignation for his malevolence. Such is the tendency of the article to which I have alluded.

After some flimsy observations on the writings of Hume and Gibbon, he tells us in a very sapient tone, that if the process of the latter's religious changes had been reversed, by passing from Paganism to Popery, and from Popery to Protestantism, there he would finally have rested his conviction.—Wise and incontrovertible conclusion! The comprehensiveness of this writer disdains the slow and gradual process of inquiry, and his sagacity discovers inferences which would have escaped less discerning intellects. I should wish to learn from what premises he has deduced such a consequence. I know of no *à priori* principle that could warrant its extravagance; and if we recur to the less fallacious criterion of experience, the history of the sectaries that sprung from the bosom of Protestantism should have pointed out to him an opposite train of argument.

History furnishes us with numberless examples of persons—nay, of nations, passing from Paganism to Popery, and reposing there. It has preserved instances, too, of many reconciled from Protestantism to Popery, and enjoying all the

tranquillity of a settled conviction. As I must suppose that the writer of this article has some acquaintance with Biography, I will now spare myself the necessity of swelling this letter by detailing a variety of examples ; but I have scarcely read of any passing from the extreme of Infidelity to the opposite one of Popery, and gently returning to the well-poised mean of the Protestant religion. Did the writer but advert a little to the bent of the human mind, he would discover that, after freeing itself from the burthen of authority, it proceeds, by an easy and natural consequence, to the extreme of licentiousness. Thus we find Protestantism, soon after its establishment, producing Socinianism ; Socinianism refined into the more philosophic name of Unitarianism ; until the private spirit, like fame, acquiring strength in its progress, has closed its career in deism and irreligion. Thus, we can trace to the principles of Protestantism all the errors that have, for three centuries, assumed and disfigured the name of Christianity.

This truth is further exemplified in the life of Mr. Gibbon. He tells us himself, that early in life he imbibed the spirit of religious controversy ; that the eagerness of his curiosity prompted his inquiries beyond the polemics of his own sect, and that the result of his labours was a sincere conversion to the Catholic faith. He tells us,

fnrther, that his conversion was achieved by the writings of Bossuet : a compliment extorted from his prejudice and his pride, by the genius of the illustrious prelate. But how was this conviction conquered ? The youth, by following the genuine principles of the Protestant religion—thinking for himself—had abandoned the faith of his fathers, and incurred the inexpressible guilt of apostacy. This was a crime which no integrity of life could atone for, and no brilliancy of talent could redeem. To cure him of his distemper, he was sent to breathe the lighter atmosphere of Lausanne. He could not be ignorant of the object of his exile : he felt his father's displeasure, and was threatened to be disheired if he did not retrace his footsteps. Such is the boasted freedom of the Protestant religion.

Whoever, then, reflects on the influence of temporal motives on a mind young, sanguine, and aspiring, in which the principles of religion were not suffered to ripen, will not be surprised at his desertion of the Catholic communion :

For present joys are more to flesh and blood

Than a dull prospect of a distant good.

Even this apostacy is honourable to the Catholic faith. His first inquiry, and consequent conversion, the fruits of an unfettered freedom of judgment, prove the insecurity under which he laboured in the Protestant church ; but on being

compelled to desert the pale of the Catholic church, he was far from taking shelter in the communion which he first abandoned. He had too much discernment not to be disgusted with the half faith and half philosophy of the Protestant religion; and therefore, the same insecurity of mind that first prompted him to abjure its tenets, made him now push them to the farthest verge of their application, until at last he sought repose in absolute infidelity.

The writer of the article tells us, that Mr. Gibbon was armed with as much logic and general argument when he abjured the Catholic religion as the defenders of that religion generally possess. Waving that point, Mr. Gibbon's logic and criticism cannot be a cause of alarm to the Catholic, or of triumph to the Protestant, when we reflect that he rejected the Pope's supremacy, because he believed, though contrary to the evidence of history, and the admission of Protestants, that St. Peter never came to Rome; and disbelieved the real presence, because mysteries are not capable of physical demonstration.

Such was the revolution of Mr. Gibbon's religious opinions—a revolution naturally arising from the genius of the reformation, and exemplified in the characters of many eminent men. If, therefore, any one could have rested his conviction in that religion, he would have rested it in

what is unsettled and undefined. For what is the Protestant religion but a negative system, fashioned to the genius of every clime, and bending to the caprice of every teacher—incorporating in its creed doctrines the most discordant, and concealing, by a community of name, sectaries the most irreconcilable—Episcopalian in England—rejecting episcopacy as antichristian in Scotland and Geneva—in the expositions of Drs. Marsh and Burnet making the thirty-nine articles the standard of orthodoxy—in the moderation of Dr. Hoadly enlarging the terms of communion, but in the unbounded liberality of Dr. Watson, admitting the human race, by adopting the phrase of Tacitus as its maxim, *sentire quæ velis et quæ sentia, dicere*. No wonder that a system so loose and arbitrary would conduct its votaries to downright scepticism. It has been well remarked by Rousseau, that the philosopher who rejects revelation, and the Catholic who admits it without reserve, are both consistent. But the Protestant, who attempts to steer a middle course, by adopting for his religion an unnatural mixture of faith and freedom, exposes himself to the just ridicule of either.

“ To take up half on trust, and half to try,

“ Call it not faith, but bungling bigotry.”

I dread, Sir, that my letter has been too long. From the copiousness of the matter it has swelled

to a size beyond what I first intended. In conclusion, I would advise the Dublin Journal to spare his oblique reflections on the Catholic religion. For the work of abuse, indeed, he may be fitted, as it requires not much capacity ; but for wielding the weighty weapons of controversy, nature never destined him. He may occasionally fling his objurgations at the errors of Popery, of which he probably knows as little as of the mythology of the Zendavesta.* As well might the lowly workman cast an artist's glance over the vastness of St. Peter's, and rise to its sublimity, as the Dublin Journal attempt to comprehend the grandeur of his spiritual edifice, and feel the beauties of its proportions.

HIEROPHILOS.

* The Zendavesta, also known by the name of Zend, is the code of laws and religion which the Persians are supposed to have received from Zoroaster.—See D'Herbelot, Bibliotheq. Orient. p. 917.

LETTER VIII.

TO THE

CATHOLIC CLERGY OF IRELAND,

ON

THE SUBJECT OF THE BIBLE SOCIETIES.

Αἰδώς δ' ἄννεον ἀνδρα γεραιτερον ἐξερεσθαι—ODYSSEY.

“ Awful th’ approach, and hard the task appears,

“ T’ address with wisdom men of riper years.”—POPE.

To persons whose breasts are burning with zeal, and whose minds are the repositories of knowledge ; whose virtues have been proved in the most trying period of our history, and who have gathered wisdom from experience ; admonition may seem unseasonable and obtrusive. However, as all are not equally sensible of the danger which menaces the religion of which they are naturally the guardians, it may not be useless to address the great body of the Catholic Priests ; and if the Prelates should be respectfully reminded of their trust, they will pardon a free-

dom which will be always tempered with reverence for so venerable a body.

During the short period which has passed before my observation, revolutions have arisen that have had no parallel in history. Among those I have watched the progress of a society the most singular in its composition, and yet the most systematic in its operation, of any that hitherto appeared; a society that is spreading with rapid increase, and profusely scattering its colonies over different quarters of the globe. Of the object and tendency of these societies (for now they are multiplied), no one needs information who has glanced over the reports, that inveigh with such holy warmth against the superstitions of Popery. Although I have not been unobservant of their movements, I was hitherto silent; either because I saw the danger too distant to excite alarm, or from a consciousness of my own inability to arrest its progress. I knew that ere they reached the firm array of the Catholic church, they had a warfare to carry on with those who were attached to no particular creed, and those of the established church, on whom its faith sits so loosely as to become an easy prey to every adventurous enthusiast.

That great numbers are now detached from the established church, and ranged under the standard of one or other of those societies, the com-

plaints of our Protestant Ministers bear ample testimony. Flushed with the confidence inspired by such a defection, they are now making redoubled efforts to carry their system into the heart of the Catholic population. But, thank God, they have met with a firm and decided resistance. Mortified by defeat, they have not resigned the hope of conquest; and while they seem to suspend their hostility, they have only changed their method of attack. It is true, that now their tone is altered: their professions are become more liberal; but you may rest assured, that it is only for the purpose of stealing into your confidence, and disarming that opposition which harsher methods could not subdue.

If the men of rank, and weight, and character in the country, are sincere in their endeavours to diffuse education, unembittered by religious bigotry, it is not difficult to put their sincerity to the test. If I could offer an advice, I would suggest that you would avail yourselves of the favourable moment of the accession of his present Majesty. Convey to the throne the sincere expression of your condolence and congratulation, and petition for a portion of these grants that are given for the purposes of education. If but a small sum of money were put into the hands of each of the Catholic Bishops, schools could be established for educating the Catholic

children ; and a few tracts, containing a simple summary of religious and moral principles, might be circulated among them. This would be a method less expensive to the subscribers, less derogatory to the dignity of the sacred volume, than that which is now pursued, and still less prejudicial to the peasantry, as it would save them from the danger of extracting from its contents a dark and desperate fanaticism.

If the Legislature should acquiesce in the prayer of such a petition, I am sure they would find it to their account, in the growing attachment of the people for so liberal and conciliating a system. Should you be disappointed in that appeal, make still an experiment on those who are loudest in the praise of education. But if they should refuse their aid to any plan that will not be regulated by the principle of these societies, is it not then clear, that whatever may be their pretensions, their purpose is proselytism?

It is to be regretted that some uniform system of defence has not been hitherto adopted. If some have evinced a steady zeal in opposing the designs of the Gospellers, others have aspired to the merit of a more prudent line of conduct. Thus the activity of some is neutralized by the passiveness of their colleagues, and the enemy is strengthened by the evidence of indecision in your councils. It is not by desultory efforts, however

ably conducted, that the enemy is to be defeated, but by a compact well regulated plan, originating with the Bishops, and adopted by the great body of the Clergy. The exertions of the societies cannot be any longer contemplated with indifference. It is then the duty of these whom the Holy Ghost has placed as Bishops, to rule the Church of God (Acts 20), to provide for its defence. Let the more humble labourers in the ministry be more assiduous in instructing their flock, and dispensing to them the truths of Christianity, in language adapted to their simple comprehensions. Let them, in the words of St. Paul to Timothy, "Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, intreat, rebuke with all patience and doctrine." Thus you will remove these causes of complaint, on which our enemies dwell with rapture, and refute the insidious slander, that the people are consigned to a studied and systematic ignorance.

Hitherto some irresolution might be excusable, from an anxiety to discover the sentiments of Rome. Now that plea is removed, her accredited document is before you, deploring the delusion practised on the people, and cautioning the pastors from suffering the growth of weeds in the vineyard confided to their care. Do not then suffer yourselves to be over-reached by the arts of the designing. Let not too confiding a dispo-

sition betray you into a security which you may have afterwards cause to deplore. Recollect how the unsuspecting simplicity of many was duped, in the reign of Constantius, by those who were practised in the intrigues of the Arian faction. Judging of the sincerity of others by the singleness of their own minds, they were seduced into measures at which they afterwards startled.

Far be from me the wish to impede the current of information that is now working its way through the humble classes of society. Far be it from me to endeavour to embitter it by the infusion of religious acrimony. I should, if possible, give it a wider and more rapid diffusion, and purify it from every ingredient that could infect its salutary qualities. But as this cannot be done while there exists a suspicion, that under the mask of educating there lurks a design of proselytizing the people, let the abettors of the Bible-system remove the cause of such well-grounded distrust; let them not insist on the introduction of the Bible, and our Prelates in their wisdom will determine what books may be substituted. With regard to the latitude allowed to private families, that too may be safely entrusted to their discretion. I may be permitted to add, with Mr. Lingard, that it is not the spirit of the Catholic Church to lock up the Scriptures from the laity, unless compelled by necessity.

How often will it be asserted that the Bible, the most sublime of all compositions, is not a book fitted for the unripe understanding of a school-boy! Written in a language which has ceased to be the vehicle of familiar intercourse, its truths are often veiled in the necessary obscurity of an obsolete idiom. Imparted to a people of ardent feeling and warm fancy, its language is enlivened by all the animation of oriental metaphor, and obscured by the necessary influence of exotic customs. Yet this is the book which, it is confidently asserted, is adapted to persons of every age and condition. Nay, more, it is not only to be indiscriminately circulated, but put into the hands of the peasantry, without notes to illustrate its meaning, or pastors to enforce its authority.

The simplifying process that pervades natural philosophy is now reaching religion itself, and the elixir of life has been discovered in the all-healing qualities of the Bible. If people are discontented, give them the Bible and it will appease them—if they are hungry, the Bible will satisfy them—if they are out of employment—the Bible will give them occupation; in short, the Bible will appease every discontent and mitigate every suffering. But it must be the pure, simple Bible, without the admixture

of such *abominations* as notes, or creeds, or commentaries; because these spiritual alchymists have discovered that the least particle of human authority infects the blessedness of the inspired volume.

I will not now draw out the dark catalogue of errors to which an undisciplined perusal of the Scriptures gave rise. But I must say, that while I read the evidence of their obscurity in the comment which the finger of history has traced, in the dire disorders of fanatics of every age, I cannot resign my conviction of the danger of their indiscriminate diffusion. Men of warm and benevolent feeling are often caught by delusive theories of promoting the happiness of the human race. That such men are engaged in the Bible-system, in justice to human nature, I must admit. It were to be wished, however, that they listened to the sober lessons of experience. But that there are others actuated more by a deadly hostility to the religion, than by compassion for the ignorance of the people, I am equally convinced. Hence, their unyielding perseverance in their own plan, in opposition to any improvement that may be proposed. Education coming from such men I should receive with the most timid and scrupulous caution. Better listen in time to the admonition,

..... *Aut ulla putatis*
*Dona carere dolis Danaum?**

than afterwards to deplore in the language of the same Poet, the blindness which made you insensible to your danger :

Cantique dolis lachrymisque coacti
Quos neque Tydides nec Larisseus Achilles.
Non anni domuere decem, non mille carinæ.†

But I hope better things. The zeal which supported your predecessors in an open contest, will now arm you with vigilance against a more covert hostility. To conclude—to you religion looks for support against fanaticism—to you the repose of the country against those who would shake it with a religious warfare—to you the peasantry, already too irritable, look for aid against those who would inflame them with a biblical phrenzy—and to you, the growing generation, who hunger for instruction, turn with fervent hopes, that while food is administered to their minds, you will not suffer their faith to be poisoned. I cannot more appropriately close this address than

* Somewhat is sure designed, by fraud or force ;
 Trust not their presents, nor admit the horse.

† What Diomedes, nor Thetis, greater son,
 A thousand ships, nor ten years' siege had done,
 False tears, and fawning words, the city won. }

DRYDEN.

in the words of the dying Mathathias to his children:—"Now, therefore, O! my sons, be zealous for the law, and give your lives for the covenant of your fathers; and call to remembrance the work of the Fathers, which they have done in their generations, and you shall gain great glory and an everlasting name."

HIEROPHILOS.

LETTER IX.

*Tum vero manifesta fides, Danaumque potescunt,
Insidiæ.*—VIRGIL.

“ And now his faith was manifestly clear’d,
“ And Grecian frauds in open light appear’d.”—DRYDEN.

YES, the designs of the Bible Society are at length unmasked—the visor which bigotry has worn is now torn off, and her object is held up without disguise to the observation of an impartial public. In my last I ventured to assert that the abettors of that system were animated by a secret hostility to the Catholic religion. The assertion may have been deemed hazardous: however, it has been justified by the result of the last meeting—a result which has imposed on the Gospellers the necessity of coming to a fair and open contest. Thanks to the intrepidity of Mr. O’Connell, who was not to be appalled by the frightful array which bigotry had drawn up against him.*

* The approbation expressed in my letter of Mr. O’Connell’s intrepid conduct, is not meant to have any reference to his political character: this Hierophilos leaves to the approbation of more skillful

I look upon the last meeting as auspicious, because it brings the principles of the society, uncoloured by specious pretences, before the tribunal of public opinion. I should hope there is an end to all suspicions on the one hand, and palliatives on the other ; and now that every subterfuge is removed, the system must stand or fall by its own intrinsic merit. For eight years, and more, have the Catholics been assailed by the emissaries of this Society ; and if they were incredulous enough to distrust its object, they were sure to be taxed with bigotry and superstition.

Doubtless, the consequences of the last meeting will furnish a rich theme for pathetic declamation. The young aspirants after literary fame may soon have occasion to pour out their pity or indignation at the incurable folly and stubbornness of the Irish. But while they deplore our perverseness, we will be content with the arguments furnished by the names of Leinster and Cloncurry, to justify our distrust. While these benevolent noblemen thought that to circulate knowledge was the object of the Society, they cordially lent it their support ; but, on learning that a proselytizing principle was its treacherous

politicians. But whatever may be the discrepancy of their opinions, it cannot be denied that on this occasion the sturdy wedge had well nigh cleft the block.

purpose, they indignantly disclaimed any alliance with so unholy a project. Well might Mr. O'Connell make them a present of their majority ; when the corner-stone is removed, it is easy to predict the fate of the edifice. The generosity of such conduct will not be unappreciated. And, while I dwell with pleasure on the virtues of the Duke of Leinster, I should not withhold the meed of gratitude from the son of Curran, who emulates the spirit of his illustrious father, and breathes a portion of that eloquence which often struck dumb the advocates of illiberality.

To Mr. North, the advocate of the Bible Society, I beg leave now to address myself. In your eloquent address to the Society, I have no doubt, Sir, but you imagined you were asserting knowledge against ignorance, and religion against superstition. It would be derogatory to the known benevolence of your character to make any other supposition. But I regret, Sir, that your zeal for a favourite opinion has led you to underrate the powers of your own mind. You assert that the Scriptures are obvious to every capacity ; for you never discovered any difficulties in them, nor were you ever enlightened by commentators. It might be an incalculable loss to mankind, were you to divert your attention from the study of the law, which you may be destined to illustrate, to the heavy pages of Polus

or Lightfoot : and hence it is not surprising that you were not enlightened by their labours. You have discovered no difficulties in the Scriptures ; I will not suppose that you have not read them, it would be injurious to your piety ; though it must be confessed that the genius of your eloquence is fonder of lingering on Parnassus than on Sion : nor does it breathe those deep inspirations from Siloa's brook that are found in our immortal countrymen, Burke and Curran. But as you have discovered no difficulties in the entire of the Scriptures, I congratulate the public on the important truth. Perhaps you would favour us with an *antidote* against the Apocalyptic mania that has, for near three centuries, diseased the intellect of the sister country. You, Sir, have discovered no difficulties ; therefore the Scriptures are obvious to every capacity. Admirable conclusion ! — Were I to say, Mr. North, that I discovered no difficulties in the law, and hence it was obvious to every individual, you might be inclined to bend the gravity of your muscles. If, however, you have been enabled to sound the depths of the Scriptures, imagine not that all are equally gifted. What may be clear to some, may be comparatively obscure to others ; and, while the mind of Mr. North sheds a train of glory over the path of its inquiry, others must grope their way by the feeble lights of criticism and conjecture. I will

not, Sir, dispute the supremacy of your intellect, but without meaning disrespect I must assert, that after some attention to the inspired volume, I have been led to embrace a different opinion. Of course, we ought to respect each other's honest conviction.

Hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim.

To the Bible Association I would now direct myself, in the name of the people of Ireland, in language which, if all would not be supposed to utter, all would understand.

If you had tendered to us the blessings of education solely, we would have accepted the boon with hearts full of thankfulness ; we would have gladly hailed the dawning of a spirit which mitigated the rigour of former times, and our gratitude would consecrate the remembrance of our benefactors. But, alas ! we have been duped by hollow professions ; and while persuasion sleeked the tongues of our deceivers, we were not aware of the “ venom that was under their lips.” You give us the Bible, but we, whose lot is labour, have not time to peruse its contents. Why withhold from us the Catechism, a regular system of faith and morals, compiled from the Scriptures by the zeal of our pastors, and best fitted to our necessities ? But still, if you give us the Bible, why take away the spirit that enlivens and informs

it ? In reading over its mysteries, like the Eunuch of Ethiopia, who was bewildered by the visions of Isaiah, we would be obliged to cry out, how can we understand, unless some one point out the meaning ? Take not, then, from us the anchor of our faith, lest, loosened from its hold, we be drifted to and fro by every wind of doctrine. Talk not to us of the illuminations of the Spirit ; uninformed as we are, we have heard of its extravagancies. Leave us the simple uniformity of our creed, and we will not envy you the diversity of your Babel dialects. Spare your invectives against the despotism of our pastors. Under circumstances the most discouraging, they have ministered to our spiritual wants, and explained the truths of the Gospel to those to whom they were inaccessible. Loosen not the firm hold they have on our gratitude ; our fortunes have been bound by a kindred sympathy, and, when every other hope was dashed, the accents of the pastor were the sweetest solace of our afflictions. Our religion is said to be superstitious ; still we are able to understand that it is the only one that ascends to Christ. While you then may boast of the charms of novelty, we feel that a religion, hoary with the honours of eighteen centuries, has the strongest claims on our veneration. Do not ask us, how do we know its antiquity ? It is as easy to trace back the series of

our pontiffs, as the succession of our kings ; and it is as easy to date the era of a spiritual rebellion, as the epoch of a revolution, and the establishment of a new dynasty. If our religion be superstitious, it is a superstition we share with the most enlightened nations, and the purest ages of the Church. Unreasoning, then, as our faculty is, it is not difficult to discover its preference to a religion fanciful in its creed, confined in its extent, and recent in its origin. These are the arguments that have been pressed upon our attention ; they are obvious to our capacity, they are analogous to the plan of Providence in enlightening the poor as well as the rich ; and, as we are conscious of our weakness, that very consciousness gives them force irresistible. We cannot pretend to half the lights of those who disagree among themselves ; we would, therefore, tell you, in the language of one of your own members, “ do not pull down one system until you establish another—endeavour to adjust your own differences before you can lay claim to our confidence.” Too long has our country been torn by religious discord ; we hoped that the spirit of charity had hushed it to repose. Suffer us, then, to enjoy the quiet convictions of our religion, and do not blow up all the bad passions by the unhallowed breath of fanaticism. If, under an influence that preaches patience and respect to the constituted

authorities, some of our peasantry are unfortunately turbulent, you ought to tremble for the consequences when a fanatic might point to every man in power, as one of the odious characters denounced by the Hebrew Prophets. As you value, then, the peace of the country, leave us in the enjoyment of the only legacy that has been left us. You may enlighten our minds without insulting our religion."

Such is the language which the Irish people would now address to you ; and give me leave to add, in reply to the sciolists who associate their religion with ignorance, that it is the religion which inspired the muse of Vida, and sublimed the eloquence of Bossuet. It has satisfied the inquisitive mind of Pascal, and has been illustrated by the labours of the early Fathers. If, then, the Catholics are reproached with superstition, they will be consoled by treading in the path which Leo and Chrysostom have trodden. I hope that the Prelates will not be inattentive to the appeal that has been made to them. If there be a disposition manifested to contribute to the progress of education, they will surely encourage so liberal a proposal. By training up the youth of Ireland to reading and learning the Christian doctrine, their minds would be prepared to benefit by the instruction of the Clergy.

A word at parting, to the Dublin Journal. It must, I suppose, be his impartiality that made him withhold from the public the proceedings of the last meeting. Although I deplore, perhaps, more than the Journal, the excesses of the peasantry, I cannot but admire the ingenuity that could compare them with the treason of Thistlewood. He has disclaimed a wish to attack the Catholics; if he confines himself to this negative merit, we will dispense with his advocacy. I may have occasionally an eye to the columns of that paper, and if he should be disposed to forget his disclaimer, he may rest assured that he may have occasion to favour the public with another specimen of the delicacy of his ideas, and the politeness of his language.

HIEROPHILOS.

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LETTER X.

SIR:—My attention has been directed, by a notice in your paper of Monday, to the last letter of Hierophilos, published in the Dublin Weekly Register of Saturday.* Without any intention of embroiling you in a controversy with a writer, whom I agree with you in thinking it would be more desirable to secure as a friend, than to combat as an adversary, I may be allowed to offer a few remarks on the principal points of his attack and defence, and on the original subject of the contest.

Hierophilos is unquestionably a scholar; the

* The letters to which reference is made in this place were published in the Dublin Journal of the 14th and 26th of November, and of the 19th of December respectively. The two first are addressed to the Protestant Primate of Armagh, on the subject of his Grace's secession from the Hibernian Bible Society; and from the vigour with which they are conceived, the force of the reasoning, the nature of Protestant principles, and the silence of his Lordship and his friends, may be justly deemed unanswerable. The third Bibliophilos terms "a review of some of the Catholic writers," who took share in the contention of the sectaries. The ridicule it contains bespeaks a rich, playful, though a cruel mind. As I have not authority, I cannot of course present them to the English reader.

elegance of his diction bespeaks a cultivated mind, and his thoughts, if tempered with a little more of liberality and of Christian charity, might be worthy to reach the public through a nobler channel than that in which they have been recently conveyed. This writer, however, whose talents eminently distinguish him from those, whose effusions adorn or disgrace the columns of the Register, like them betrays a spirit of party; and an immoderation and asperity of manner, highly prejudicial to the cause of truth, and most inimical to the progress of improvement. I am willing to believe that, in the present instance, he has been deceived relative to the proceedings at Kildare-street; his discrimination, indeed, should have led him to suspect the partial statement of the publisher—a statement almost too deformed to do mischief; and which it has pleased me, that neither you nor your cotemporaries have condescended to honour with animadversion. But what can justify him in fastening on the most illustrious assembly which the metropolis has witnessed for a number of years, the foul charge of bigotry and illiberality, merely because it rejected, with becoming disdain, the motion of Mr. O'Connell? Had the Society suffered it to pass, would it not be deemed a demonstration that its members had hitherto acted in violation of the principles by which they professed to be governed? Would

not all the disgusting charges, so unceasingly heaped on these enlightened individuals, be forthwith re-echoed, with malicious and triumphant exultation? By the unqualified disapprobation and dismissal of Mr. O'Connell's motion, they asserted the purity of their views, they vindicated their honour, and confirmed the confidence of the country. To Mr. O'Connell let those return thanks who feel obligation : to me his conduct on this occasion appeared only the result of that immitigable opposition, with which he has been long accustomed to treat every project originated in certain quarters, however beneficial its tendency, or obvious its advantages. His failure is a subject of just triumph : and when I reflect that he rose before a meeting, comprising all the virtue and all the worth of Ireland, to assault the honor and impeach the motives of the individuals that composed it, I admire the patience, rather than regret the indignation, with which he was heard.

To every liberal mind, the purposes of the Society must appear benevolent and honorable. What but the most laudable and patriotic designs, could unite so many of talent, of rank, and of piety, in the tedious and laborious prosecution of the objects to which they have gratuitously devoted their attention? The success of their exertions is an abundant refutation of the calumnies of the advocates of ignorance, and a

satisfactory attestation of the purity and zeal by which they have been actuated. Conscious of its rectitude, the Society will continue its noble efforts in the cause of humanity, unmoved by partial desertion, and unsubdued by the difficulties it has hitherto encountered, with success. The diffusion of learning is the advancement of morality and the promotion of social order. In such a cause, who can be indifferent? The wishes of the wise and good, among its cotemporaries, second its endeavours in the execution of the glorious work—the benedictions of posterity await them. Should a higher incentive be wanting, it might be found in the recollection, that “they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that *turn many to righteousness*, as the stars for ever and ever.” Dan. xii. 3.

The conduct of Mr. North is dignified with the second place in the epistle of Hierophilos; doubtless for the purpose of trying his strength or dexterity in a rencounter with that gentleman. Should Mr. North think the defiance worth acceptance, no one acquainted with his skill can doubt the success of his lance. In the mean time, it is foreign to my design to undertake, at length, the defence of this favourite of Themis and the muses: he needs not my feeble advocacy. The eulogy of the Bench attests the force of his eloquence, and

the excellence of his pleading ; the applause bestowed on his oration in Kildare-street, establishes the genuineness of his philanthropy, and the sincerity of his piety. Without the honour of Mr. North's intimacy, I think myself sufficiently in possession of his sentiments, to assure the public that with such approbation, he will never be disinclined to purchase the irony or the enmity of Hierophilos. But "the genius of Mr. North's eloquence is fonder of lingering on Parnassus than on Sion ; nor does it breathe those deep inspirations from Siloa's brook that are to be found in our immortal countrymen, Burke and Curran." And does not Hierophilos display a taste more disposed to seek the favours of the Ausonian Sisters, than to woo the Nymphs of Solyma ? Does not his style affect more the *persuasive words* of profane erudition, than the sober sublimity of revelation ?

Is not his very language a fac-simile of the diction of one of the greatest of the enemies of Christianity ? What is there in the present, or in the antecedent letters of this writer, to induce a belief, that he cultivates the close acquaintance with the sacred volume, which he so much admires in Burke and Curran, and so warmly recommends to Mr. North ? The guilt of Mr. North's insinuated neglect of the Scriptures is aggravated by the assertion "that they are easily understood." This is not the place to discuss the clearness or

obscurity, the intelligibility or abstruseness of the pages of inspiration. It will suffice to remark, that Mr. North could be understood to mean no more, than that to a mind properly disposed for their perusal, they present not greater difficulties than are to be found in the generality of the works intended for the instruction and direction of mankind. Will such a proposition be combated by Hierophilos? I am ashamed of his sarcasm on the humble modesty of Mr. North's opinion of the sagacity of the multitude: such a sentiment deserved the praise, not the reproach of a candid antagonist.

On the eloquent but fanciful address of the Irish peasantry, I shall say but little; were they capable of expressing or of understanding such language, they would have but little need of the benefits which the Society labours to confer. The painting of Hierophilos may shew the skill of a master, but does not the partial colouring betray the flattery of a mistaken friend? His ignorance, if not affected, is surprising. As I cannot suppose him guilty of withholding the truth for the base purpose of perpetuating the misery and degradation of the country, I shall take the liberty of referring him to the sources of more correct, though less grateful information. The Reports, and the ample Correspondence of the Society, since its foundation, with several of the most

respectable of the clergy and laity of Ireland.

2. The Annual Reports and Correspondence of the Bible Society. 3. The accounts of the gentlemen

employed by the Missionary Society, as contained in their Reports and various other publications.

4. The testimony of such as have, in latter years, written or spoken on the state of the country.

5. The pastoral addresses of the Roman Catholic Prelates, who admit the necessity and advantages of education, though they chance not to

relish the form in which it is presented to their flocks. 6. The experience of any intelligent

person whom he will take the trouble of consulting on the subject. It is unnecessary to swell my

page with a detail of the odious particulars; suffice it to say, that from the relation of men

whose motives must be above all suspicion, and whose charitable benevolence brought them into

frequent contact with the evils they describe, our people are lamentably ignorant and vicious,

turbulent and immoral, the tenor of their lives frequently a disgrace to religion, and a reproach

to the national character. Very different is the picture which the authorities I have named,

combine in forming, from that traced by the hand of Hierophilos: but the likeness, though

disgusting, is just; truth alone held the pencil.

On the circulation and perusal of the Scriptures, and their introduction into schools—the only

question of controversy, Hierophilos has judged it unnecessary or unadvisable to hazard an opinion. That, however, he is not favourable to the system, may be easily collected from the obvious drift of his remarks. To appeal to the authority of the divine volume itself would be superfluous; it so clearly sanctions the views and the practice of the Society, that its antagonists are compelled to rest their opposition on the supposed regulations of the Catholic Church. On the wisdom or impropriety, the utility or disadvantages of such policy, I do not now intend to trouble you or the public with any observation; but when Hierophilos covers himself and the Irish peasantry with the buckler of the "Fathers," I may be permitted to inquire how far it is likely to afford them protection.

"This divine pedagogue (preceptor) proposes to us in the Scripture, all kinds of instructions, examples, and parables, calculated to withdraw us from vice and bring us to virtue." Clement of Alexandria, Pedagogue, 3d Book, 8th Chapter. "The sacrifices of a christian are prayer, the praises of God, and the perusal of the sacred books. We must expect to fall, when we refuse to follow the guidance of God, who directs us by the means of Scripture divinely inspired." Do. 7th Book.

"We beseech you not to rest satisfied with

hearing the word of God whilst it is read in the church, but to apply yourselves to the perusal of it in your own houses, and to meditate by day and by night on the law of the Lord. Jesus Christ is present with you at home, as well as in the church, and those that seek him, find him every where. It is for this reason, that we are commanded to meditate on the law of God, in our journey and in our houses, when we prepare for repose or rise from sleep." Origen. 9th Homily on Leviticus.

"One of the best means of learning how to discharge our various duties, is the meditation and study of the divinely inspired writings. For they are all replete with unction; and the lives of several holy personages which they contain, are living models for our imitation, that we may walk in the footsteps of the great men of the divine republic. Let him then, who feels himself weak in any particular, familiarize himself with this lecture, and he will find in it the best cure of his languor and infirmities." Basil. First Letter to Gregory Nazianzen.

"Abandoning and forgetting the follies and amusements of the theatre and of the poets, let us nourish our soul with the meditation and study of the holy scriptures. Sensible how much it (the soul) is tormented by the hunger and the thirst of vain curiosity, and of the vanity of

seeking its gratification, and content in deceitful phantoms which are as painted meats, let us fill and satisfy it with the celestial food of the holy scriptures. Let us seek instruction in a school so worthy the children of God." Augustin, Book on the true Religion, chap. 51

"Who is there among you that now hear me, who, if required, could repeat from memory a single psalm or any other portion of scripture? Not one. And what is more to be lamented in your indifference for holy things, you feel the warmest ardour for such as are detestable, and worthy only of devils. Were a person, on the contrary, to ask you to repeat some of the indecent songs, and immodest airs of the stage, he would find many of them who had learned them by heart, and who would recite them with pleasure. But what is the excuse for such great excesses? I am not, each will say, a religious or a solitary. I have a wife and a family, and am burdened with the care of domestic concerns. What ruins so many now-a-days, is your belief that those alone who are engaged in religion, are bound to read the holy scripture, whereas this lecture is much more necessary for you than for them. Those who are every day exposed to the combat, and who receive so many wounds, have by far the greatest need of remedies. To imagine we have no need of the Scripture, and to look

upon it as superfluous, is still worse than to neglect its perusal; the devil only could inspire such thoughts." John Chrysostom. Second Homily on Saint Matthew.

Such, Sir, are a few of the many passages that might be alleged from the "Fathers," in justification of the conduct of the Society for the Education of the Poor of Ireland. 'Tis for the public to judge how far they serve or injure the cause of the enemies of the Bible. They are not unworthy of the consideration of Hierophilos; though they should fail of inducing him to co-operate actively with the Society, it may at least be hoped they will teach him to respect a plan founded on the words of inspiration, and recommended by the writings and the practice of the purest ages of Christianity.

BIBLIOPHILOS.

LETTER XI.

Τῷ τοι ἐπιτλήτω κραδίη μυθοῖσιν ἐμοῖσιν.

Αἰψά τε φυλόπιδος πέλεται κόρος ἀνθρώποισιν.—ILIAD.

“Then hear my counsel, and to reason yield,

“The bravest soon are satiate of the field.”—POPE.

My last letter, it seems, has been honoured with the perusal and attention of one of the Evangelical Association. As I presume that my readers cannot feel much interested in the personal merits of two rival writers, I will not waste my time, or their patience, in returning the compliments which Bibliophilos has been pleased to bestow upon me. I will not, therefore, stop to analyze his composition, although it has strong claims to praise; nor will I inquire after what model of the ancients or moderns it has been fashioned. For aught that regards the present controversy, it is to me a matter of indifference, whether my adversary chooses to stray on the banks of the Peneus, or “the flood of Chobar,”*

* A river in Chaldea, frequently mentioned in Ezekiel, see i, ii, x, chapters, &c.

and crop the flowers of his diction in the vale of Tempe or of Hebron.

But there is another species of literature which he seems to have cultivated with success, and which seems to have given a dignified cast to his style. That he is deeply read in the ceremonial of chivalry, his manner bears striking evidence; while the bucklers, and lists, and lances, that figure in his letter, reveal the breathings of a mind burning for the combat, the measured tone of his language shews, that he is not more anxious to distinguish himself by his prowess than his politeness. I would recommend a portion of his civility to those who sour the most sacred subject by the most offensive acrimony. To engage with such a champion cannot be an ungracious task. Although it may be a loss of time, there is little danger of a loss of temper; and, though the justness of his cause, or the temper of his weapon, should fail to secure success, he is sure to enlist the public sympathy by the courtesy of his demeanor. After this salutation, it may be necessary to proceed to try the strength or weakness of my adversary. I must remark, however, with regard to his unmerited attack on the Weekly Register, that I will be content to make so respectable a paper the vehicle of my thoughts, while I cannot imagine that the elegance of Bibliophilos will ever borrow a

richer tinge from the medium of the Dublin Journal.

As his first observations may be considered as feeble outposts to guard the citadel, they will not detain me long. However, they exhibit a specimen of his skilful disposition ; calculating, no doubt, that though his cause was not staked on their strength, they might exhaust the patience of his opponent. How does he acquit the Education Society of the charge of bigotry and intolerance? By the most unheard-of mode of justification. Little did I imagine to find a writer, jealous of the nicest civilities of life, the panegyrist of the most outrageous violation of decorum. Little did I imagine, that the advocate of liberality and freedom would applaud that monopoly of mind, which laboured to wrest from others the invaluable privilege of discussion, which itself exclusively arrogated. “ By the unqualified disapprobation and dismissal of Mr. O’Connell’s motion, they asserted the purity of their views, they vindicated their honour, and confirmed the confidence of their country.” A novel way of winning confidence, indeed!

If any circumstance could rivet still more closely the distrust of the country, it is the proceedings of the last meeting. If their conduct was as blameless as they boasted—if the principles and practice of the Society were in unison,

why not fearlessly court investigation? Surely, such solicitude to dismiss Mr. O'Connell's motion, betrays a consciousness that there was something within too tender to sustain a public scrutiny. It is in vain that he may reason on the virtues and benevolence of the members. No, not all the speculations of Bibliophilos, however ingeniously clothed, and pointedly expressed, can resist the stubborn testimony of the facts that are on record; and, "though they should multiply to themselves the herb borith," it will not blot out the deep impression. If he should ask, what could induce persons to devote their time, "gratuitously," to such an object, I will refer him to the speech of Lord Cloncurry, who had an opportunity of drawing aside the veil that covered the mystery of their proceedings.

From his Lordship has transpired the important secret, that some of the members of the Society were drawn within its magic circle, not more by the invitations of the spirit, than by the attractions of the treasury. But as this part of the letter furnishes a finer specimen of the rhetoric than the reasoning of my adversary, I envy not the Society the aid of his declamation. I am myself unwilling to confound all its members—I have before acknowledged that it is patronized by some whose motives are above impeachment—but even the great and the good may

be deceived by splendid projects, and the worthless endeavour to hide their own littleness under the shadow of their virtues.

Fallit enim vitium specie virtutis et umbra.

As to Mr. North, if he is not cased in the panoply of Bibliophilos, he would probably dispense with the officious advocacy of his friend. Surely, I have no enmity to that gentleman. That he is an excellent pleader, I am ready to acknowledge; but though I might bow to his opinion on a point of law, I might consider him an unsafe guide in concerns of religion.* I will bear willing testimony to the eloquence of his panegyric of the Scriptures at the late meeting; yet I have read still more fervid eulogies, from persons who believed not a tittle of their inspiration. But, really, the subject is too important to hinge on the opinions of any individuals; I will, therefore, beg leave to allow Messrs. North and O'Connell, as they are perfectly competent to the task, to defend their own cause.

I know not how my supposed address to the Irish people, which he has been pleased to call eloquent, but fanciful, is affected by his observa-

* I take this opportunity of freeing Mr. North from the imputation conveyed in the text, as I have been informed that this gentleman is totally innocent of the elegant letters of Bibliophilos.

tions. I have not violated the congruity of character by putting reasoning into their mouths too abstruse for their simplicity ; nor have I paid the dangerous compliment to their ignorance, of erecting it into a tribunal of religious truth. Although they might be capable of comprehending the few arguments with which I furnished them, still might they require the aid of the good and the benevolent. It is rather strange to deny to the people the apprehension of a few obvious principles, who, if we believe our adversaries, are capable of ranging with safety through the inspired volume, and understanding with ease the visions of Ezekiel.

As to his picture of the turbulence and immorality of the Irish people, a picture which, “ by its dark colouring and distorted features, betrays the hand of an enemy,” I must remark that I was not the apologist of their innocence ; but, until he shews that they are below the level of their neighbours, who are amply provided with Bibles, and that the Bible is a panacea for the evils which he exaggerates, it is quite unnecessary to dwell upon the subject. To whom does he refer me for information ?—to vague and nameless authorities, or the more suspicious reports of the Bible Societies ! I question whether he has ever waded through the shapeless mass ; he seems to have shewn more anxiety for the improvement of his

time and talents, than to have wasted his attention on such whining compositions.

When he introduces the Prelates, and forcibly classes them with these "errant saints," to depose in favour of his system, they must surely appreciate the compliment of being put in such good company. I did expect from the sobriety of Bibliophilos a more temperate allusion to Scripture, than to apply the words of Daniel to persons, of whom some might be more strongly marked by the denunciation of another Prophet.* But as I would tremble to introduce lightly the words of the inspired writings, perhaps they would find themselves appropriately habited in the costume of an English poet:

"In gospel-phrase their chapmen they betray,

"Their shops are dens, their buyers are their prey ;

"All hands unite, of every jarring sect,

"They cheat the country first, and then infect."

We now come to the last and greatest point of Bibliophilos, for which he seems to have reserved all the resources of his skill and dexterity. To this part, as it is one of vital importance, I invite my reader to come with a severe, unbiassed, and discriminating judgment.

* Jeremias, chap. 23, v. 31, &c.—"Behold, I am *against the Prophet*, saith the Lord, who use their tongue, and say, 'the Lord saith it.'"

As I would not expect, from the ingenuousness of my opponent, that he would recur to the subterfuges of little polemics, I am willing to believe that he has rather mistaken than misrepresented my meaning. He says, I have appealed to the practice of the Church ; and after coming up with a heavy phalanx of the Fathers, triumphantly concludes that I had no claim to their support. I know not how this is reconcileable with the anxiety he feels to know my opinion on the diffusion of the Scriptures—an opinion which, according to him, I have studiously disguised. Lest, however, I should fall into a similar mistake, of mis-stating his letter, I subjoin his own words : “ On the circulation and perusal of the Scriptures, and their introduction into schools, the only question at issue, Hierophilos has judged it unnecessary or unadvisable to hazard an opinion.”

I am, therefore, opposed by the authority of the Fathers, on a point on which he says I have not expressed my sentiments. My expressions were, that the religion of the Catholics was the religion which was illustrated by the early Fathers ; and that they would be consoled in treading the path which Leo and Chrysostom had trodden. I would wish to know, will he undertake to combat this assertion ? If not, his long array of Fathers will not bear on my position. The

Fathers have said nothing which, if understood in the spirit it was spoken, the most rigid Catholic would not subscribe to, without any impeachment of his orthodoxy. Fortunately I have answered him by anticipation. From the attention he bestowed on the last, I may presume he has read my other letters. In one of these I have unequivocally asserted, that it never was the spirit of the Catholic Church to withhold the Scripture from the people, unless compelled by necessity.

As my sentiments are in perfect accordance with this spirit, he may be induced to think, that Hierophilos and Bibliophilos, though evidently assumed for the purpose of invidious contrast, are not irreconcilable characters. So far, then, we agree. But, to allay the triumph he may feel on this admission, I must add, that I have too much respect for the sacred volume to make it the plaything of every school-boy; and too strong a conviction of man's weakness, to allow him to wander through it without a guide. He, as an abettor of the Bible system, will controvert either position. Here then we are at issue. As the question is stripped of every circumstance that could perplex its simplicity, let us examine who is most likely to be supported by the authority of the Fathers.

According to his reasoning, the Fathers have

recommended the reading of the Scriptures, to the faithful. Therefore the system of the Education Society is sanctioned by the practice of the purest ages of Christianity. This is a conclusion that stretches beyond the extent of his premises. If he does not see a wide disparity in the cases, perhaps I would furnish him with a supposition more analogous to the present circumstances.

If, after the Catholics began to breathe from the persecution of Valens, a Society had been formed to circulate the Scriptures among the Catholics, composed of Arians and Donatists, and Nestorians, and Eutychians of a later period, and to complete the aggregate of a few Catholics, whose guileless simplicity betrayed them into a support of the system. The more exalted members of the Society, probably sincere, profess they have no wish to disturb the religious scruples of the Catholics, and hence retire to a secure distance from the din of the fanatics ; while the more busy agents push on the godlike work of distributing the Scriptures, accompanying them with the most exasperating comments on the tyranny of the Priests, and the most sarcastic commiseration of the ignorance of the people. They tell them that hitherto they have been detained in the most degrading ignorance ; and that now, by seeing the light with their own eyes, they will

renounce the guilt of exalting to the honours of the Divinity one who was clothed in the infirmities of man. If the first fervor of the zealots should occasionally subside, let us suppose that a seasonable contact with the Imperial Exchequer, restores their languid energy.

For gain has wonderful effects
T' improve the factory of sects.

Will Bibliophilos say that such a system would have been sanctioned by the Fathers? Ignorant he must be of the sternness of their principles, if he could entertain a supposition so revolting to the tenor of their lives. Had St. Augustine been so yielding, he would not have waged an alternate and unremitting war with the Pelagians and Donatists of his day; and had St. Chrysostom courted the favour, he never would have fallen a victim, to the revenge of Eudoxia. Really the Fathers were not sufficiently enlightened for the enlarged liberality of the present times; and though they knew and practised Christian charity, perhaps, as well as our modern orators, they never could "extend their view to the expansive circle of universal religion." This, or similar language, now so familiar with all who aspire to the praise of eloquence and Evangelism, is what Persius would call

*Grande aliquid quod pulmo animæ prælargus anhelet.**

This general view of the subject must, I am sure, convince every reader of the inconclusiveness of the reasoning of my opponent. Lest, however, it should be imagined that I shrink from the Fathers, I intreat his attention to the continuance of this very weighty subject. As the ground is of my adversary's choosing, I will track him in his own path; and I must, therefore, be excused if the reader finds no grateful pauses to solace the weariness of the way. It may not be unnecessary to direct the attention of Bibliophilos to a canon of criticism which reason and candour will approve.

When the Fathers wrote against the Pagans, who despised the authority of Scripture or preached against the faithful, who were regardless of its precepts, we are naturally to expect from them the most animated language, in enforcing the utility, or arraigning the neglect of the inspired writings. But again, when they

* All noise and empty pomp, a storm of words,
Labouring with sound, that little sense affords.—DRYDEN.

Lines truly characteristic of some of our much admired oratory; which, by losing sight of the chaste and simple models of antiquity, has adopted a vitiated style, in which an ordinary thought struggles under the cumbrous weight of unnecessary ornament.

pointed their reproofs against the rashness of the sectaries, who perverted their meaning, they dwell with serious solemnity on the necessity of treading over the sacred ground with a trembling and respectful caution. The contrast between his quotations and mine, from the same Fathers, will illustrate the truth and justness of this principle:—

“ They abandon the rule of truth, who interpret the Scriptures contrary to ecclesiastical tradition.”—*Clement of Alexandria, 7th Book of Sentences.*

“ As often as the heretics (the reader will pardon the offensiveness of the expression, for it is not mine) produce the canonical Scriptures, which every Christian believes, they seem to say, “ Behold, the word of God is made the inmate of your houses.” But we ought not to believe them, nor to stray from the older ecclesiastical tradition, nor to believe otherwise than according to what has been delivered to us by the succession of the Church of God.”—*Origen, Homily on St. Matthew, 29.*

“ Will every one, who pleases, be the judge of these books, although he is not able to point out his master, nor the time he spent learning them, nor exhibit any of those qualities necessary to form a judgment of books. But I know

that it is not lawful for every individual to subject to his own private judgment the things that are spoken in the oracles of the spirit."—*St. Basils, 75th Epistle to the Inhabitants of Nevacæsaria.*

"In expounding the Scriptures, we ought to feel the same alarm as persons putting to sea; not so much from the dangers of the deep, as because we are unskilful navigators."—*St. Chrysostom, Homily on Mathusalem.*

"Without being previously instructed in poetry, you would not attempt Terence without a master. Asper, Cornutus, Donatus, and numberless others, are necessary for interpreting each of the poets: and do you rush into the sacred books without a guide, and dare to explain them without a master? And again, if every art, in order to be attained, requires a master, what can argue a prouder temerity, that not to learn the sacred books from their lawful interpreters?"—*St. Augustine, on the Utility of Believing.—The 7th and 17th chapters.*

I have reserved this Father for the last place, both because he is last in the order of time, and also because he affords me an opportunity of taking my adversary on his own ground, and giving a triumphant answer to his interrogatory, where he undertakes the task of interpreting Mr.

North's opinion. With *Saint* Augustine on my side, for I confess I revere the unfashionable epithet, I need not fear the formidable union of Mr. North and his interpreter. As I do not mean to fatigue his, or my own patience, with further quotations, I would recommend the above-mentioned treatise to the perusal of Bibliophilos, as it was addressed to Honoratus, whose opinions on the plainness of the Scriptures seem to have been cast in the same mould.

I have now taken a patient review of the Fathers, and furnished a simple method of disengaging the different passages which might perplex an illiterate mind. I too, then, may confidently appeal to the judgment of the severe and the impartial, whether the Fathers are favourable to the uncontrolled perusal of the Scriptures, on the principles of the Education Society. I hail the spirit of wholesome curiosity that has directed Bibliophilos to those venerable guides, and that has given me an opportunity of introducing them to my readers. They may, on the first appearance, make an unfavourable impression, but, like many other characters of solid though unostentatious merit, they will improve on a more familiar acquaintance. However I may rejoice, I fear that his indiscretion will not be much applauded by his Biblical brethren. The aid of the

Fathers has been long since despaired of, as they were found uniformly enlisted on the side of the Catholics ; nor will all the ingenuity of Bibliophilos be able to reduce them to the flexible fidelity of Swiss auxiliaries.

HIEROPHILOS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE DUBLIN JOURNAL.

Sir:—Such of your readers as take an interest in the discussions that have grown out of the meeting at Kildare-street, and which at present occupy so large a share of the public attention, will probably expect from me, who have ventured to take a part in the controversy, some reply to the long and laboured rejoinder of Hierophilos. The remarks I offered on the penultimate letter of that gentleman, were written in the hope of engaging so accomplished a scholar in a friendly examination of the differences which have, unfortunately, divided the advocates and opposers of the Society for the Education of the Poor of Ireland. It occurred to me, that a clear and temperate exposure of the views and opinions of each, might lead to mutual concession : and, misapprehensions being removed, and prejudices corrected, the transition to complete reconciliation would not appear distant nor difficult. For the accomplishment of so desirable a purpose, I adopted the language of forbearance and moderation, and

LETTER XII.

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declined the introduction of any irrelevant or exasperating topic. Hierophilos I treated with the deference due to one, whose penetration I conceived might detect, but whose candor would not exaggerate the imperfections of our system. The courtesy of my manner, indeed, he affects to admire: but his friends will, perhaps, have more reason than his enemies to regret that he did not think it worthy of imitation. In fact, the unciliating sternness and unchristian acerbity of his last letter, in spite of the erudition and industry with which they are associated, betray a narrowness of mind and an absence of liberality, that must excite the pity of his adversaries, and that will scarcely elevate him in the estimation even of his professed admirers. But it is foreign to my wishes, as it is to my purpose, to enter into the analysis of the feelings that too frequently disfigure his letter; such a review would most likely produce the result which it is my most anxious desire to prevent. Hoping he may be induced to exchange such worthless auxiliaries for the support of reason and truth, I shall proceed, as in my last, to make a few observations on the principal parts of his elaborate but acrimonious epistle.

Hierophilos begins by complimenting the style and civility of my letter, but takes care to dilute his praise with a sufficient quantity of irony to prevent its being mistaken for commendation.

His sagacity has traced the urbanity of my manner to an acquaintance with the ceremonial of chivalry; and whether to supply his deficiency in so necessary a science, or to cheer the toil of composition, he appears to have made a pilgrimage to the shrine of some steel-clad and once adventurous knight, but like the palmerin of old, he has returned unchanged and unsanctified by the peregrination. I am willing to believe "the public but little concerned in the personal pretensions of rival disputants;" though surely the frequency with which he introduces himself to their notice, and his ingenious conjectures about Bibliophilos, manifest considerable anxiety on the subject. The discovery of his opponent cannot affect the justice, nor ensure the success, of his cause; and whether Mr. North, or one of the "Evangelical Association," be doomed to sustain his shock, can have but little influence on the issue of the combat. Let, therefore, his ambition be satisfied with the belief, which he seems to entertain, that he is matched with no ignoble foe, though, for the present, he will not drop his vizor to reveal his adversary, or correct his mistake.

If to the keen eye of Hierophilos my letter display the "breathings of a mind burning for the combat," the patience with which I awaited his third address, affords certainly no favourable im-

pression of his powers of provocation. But had I been inclined to enter the lists on slight invitation, there was surely no lack of competitors. The ground yielded to the chargers, and was strewn with the gauntlets of Patricius,* Edanus, M. W. Orthodoxious, and of others, of patronymics equally characteristic and harmonious, and equally consecrated to immortality in the archives of the Weekly Register. From the overthrow of such recreant and defenceless adventurers, who could expect to reap glory or fame? Whether their force was spent, or the friends of Hierophilos thought their courage likely to embarrass his motions, on his appearance they slunk unnoticed from a contest, in which nature never intended them to poise the spear or wield the scymi-

* The last and most dauntless of these sons of war. To his pen the public is indebted for the interesting details of the operations in the west; and to his skill should be ascribed the length of the contest. In his third communication, we are informed, that the island of Arran was blockaded in October, and from a subsequent dispatch we learn, was subsequently bombarded by Admiral Oliver. The gallant Admiral pushed on the assault with all the ardour for which he has been so long distinguished, but naval and military talents could not effect the reduction of the place, before the lamented fall of its heroic commander.

The termination of hostilities that succeeded the capture of Arran renders it probable, that the other leaders mentioned in the text, perished in the course of the campaign. Peace to the shades of the brave.

tar.* To be serious, what had I to apprehend from these gentlemen, or why should I be displeased with the illiberal tenor of their rough but innocuous argumentation. Hierophilos, whose courage quails before the unsightly mass of Society reports, may smile at the curiosity that has led me through their dim lucubrations. I shall not, however, regret it, since I have learned to appreciate more justly the merits of a cause, of which they pretend to be a successful defence. But I mean not to disturb their repose: their letters, like the labours of many of the learned, after the perusal and applause of a few discerning friends, cannot long escape, perhaps they already enrich, the peaceful magazines of the grocer or tobacconist. This, probably the last commemoration of their deserts, may minister to the vanity as it has

* Veridicus, evidently under the influence of some potent enchanter, has just crossed the barrier. From Upsal to Japan, from Tartary to Hopkins-street, from Catholics to Mahometans, from Moses to Wedderburn, from Luther and Alapide to Confucius and Hudibras, he has seen every clime, and every sect, and every author, and every knight, and embodied the result of his observations in an address, which in variety of matter and rapidity of transition, has had no parallel since the days of the renowned Baron Munchausen, and which, as it would probably puzzle a better head-piece than Aristotle, we may at least concur with *Puff* in believing to be "the production of no common hand." If Hierophilos could stoop to solicit, I do not envy him the honour of such an alliance. The friends will deplore the wayward fate of poor North. Alas! that he should escape the lance of a worthy foe, to perish under the furious club of Veridicus.

been suggested by the allusion of Hierophilos. The opportunity was, to be sure, inviting: yet I have been induced to profit of it, not so much to do justice to their pretensions, as to caution him against an example and a fate, towards which, were I less disinterested, I might rejoice that he has recently made some slight approximation.

On the Meeting in Kildare-street, as its conduct is already fully before the public, I shall not dwell at much length. I may be allowed to express my surprise, that after the polite and conciliatory letter of *Veritas*, and the temperate abstract of the proceedings published on the occasion, Hierophilos should have indulged, towards the acting members of the Society, an asperity of language and a harshness of insinuation, that can reflect disgrace only on himself. He may forgive, or extol the intentions of the greater number—they will never take a compliment that would necessarily compromise their own dignity. No, the Society is well acquainted with the honour, and the worth of the meritorious individuals, who struggle to give effect to its glorious purposes; nor will its conviction of their integrity be weakened by the atrocious but unfounded charge of embezzlement. What are the proofs of so odious and so flagitious a crime, or of the dishonesty that might justify the imputation? Why, the line of a Roman satirist; and a

speech of my Lord Cloncurry, which he never uttered, and which, should this, or the letter to which it refers, fall under the eye of his Lordship, I am sure he will be prompt to disavow : a novel mode of crimination, indeed.

The perspicacity of Hierophilos has “cased Mr. North in the panoply of his opponent.” How that gentleman may feel, in the exchange of the gown and wig for the cuirass and morion, it would be useless to guess ; but, whatever be his taste for the tourney, he cannot but be grateful for such knightly habiliments. Care should not be confined to an enemy ; after bracing Mr. North in a case of steel, he ought surely have provided suitable accoutrements for his own favourite, and often-tried champion.

Whatever be the opposition of our sentiments on the “last and greatest point,” I am glad to find that Hierophilos does not deem them altogether irreconcilable, though in what he has hitherto advanced on the subject, I must confess I see nothing to justify very sanguine anticipations of a speedy junction. Before a union can be effected, he must correct the prepossessions, and dismiss the selfishness that have long characterized his system. He must recognize that it belongs not to man to narrow the road, nor alter the terms of admission into the celestial Jerusalem ; and reject the exploded doctrines of de-

spotic authority and religious intolerance, of which, I am sorry to trace a deep tinge in many of his expressions.

He informs us that it never was the spirit of the Catholic Church to withhold the Scripture from the people. If such be the case, I can only regret that the spirit and the practice have not been in better accordance. What avails it to the poor man that his church permit, if his clergy interdict the sacred volume? Without finding in the lecture of it a panacea for all the evils that afflict the condition of our peasantry, it may at least be presumed, it would elevate their hopes, and fix their thoughts on a better world. The promise of reward, or the prospect of after-happiness, if it does not remove, at least mitigates the pain of present suffering; truly, then, the frequent contemplation of the blissful inheritance that awaits a patient resignation to the decrees of providence, is the best means of producing submission to its severe but just dispensations. Why the clergy should find it their interest to discountenance a practice that might be productive of so beneficial a result, is best known to themselves. To the discerning and impartial, their conduct must appear the effect of a policy neither upright nor commendable.

The imbecility of the human mind, and the necessity of a guide through the *mazes* of the

Scriptures, are favourite themes of Catholic declamation. And Hierophilos having advanced thus far, has, like his brethren, thought proper to decline all direct argument on these topics. As he has introduced them, it will naturally be expected that he, not I, should commence the discussion of their merits. He has, indeed, given his opinion, but surely he is too modest to believe that his assertion, without the reasons by which it may be supported, could be of sufficient weight to decide so important a controversy.

In his appeal to the Fathers, he is undoubtedly pretty successful. The canon of criticism, however, by which he endeavours to explain away my citations, might have assisted him in a milder interpretation of the passages he has produced. If these respectable writers exaggerate the advantages of the Scriptures to those who neglected their perusal, what wonder they should have somewhat magnified their difficulties to the opponents whom they conceived to have mistaken their meaning? I am reproached with having had recourse to their aid without justice or necessity, and am modestly exhorted to look in other directions for future support. Now, though I am not obliged to consider their opinion decisive, I have a right to adduce it when it is resorted to against a practice, which it may be my duty or inclination to defend. I have done no more in my letter.

The easy adaption of their sentiments to the occasion, shewed they were not impressed nor unwilling auxiliaries in the cause, and if from the manifesto of Hierophilos, the world detect in them the venal faith of the Helvetian mercenaries, to him, not to me, will it owe its obligations for the discovery.

By a fanciful supposition, the societies of modern times are assimilated to the possible combinations of the age of Valens, that the Fathers, whose minds were embittered by the obstinacy of their adversaries, might be brought to pour upon the Bible and School Associations the invectives they would, doubtless, have bestowed on the union of the Heterodox. In their days we find but few traces of the liberality of modern times ; it would have been a hopeless task, to unite the jarring elements and opposite principles of the factions that convulsed the empire into one body ; the acidity of the sectaries would sour their fiery spirit, and endanger its existence. But, had they lived to behold a meeting where every party feeling was hushed, and every selfish purpose forgotten in the love of religion, their esteem of the sacred volume, and their conviction of the benefits to be drawn from its meditation, warrant us in thinking they would ardently co-operate in diffusing through the world the blessings it wished to impart.

Should Hierophilos think proper to notice these remarks, or to develope, and discuss at length, the arguments at which he has only glanced, let me exhort him, in conclusion, to enter upon the work with a dispassionate mind, and even temper; as his talents raise him above the pretensions, let him not recur to the subterfuges of vulgar writers. He should recollect that, on matters of religion, poets are at best but indifferent authority; though, in the artful dispositions of their lines, whether to relieve the attention, or, by whetting the curiosity, to solicit the advance of the reader, he may exhibit his skill, in the esteem of the Christian he will lose more than he can gain by the introduction of their splenetic and irreligious effusions. I admire his acquirements in poetry, and applaud his veneration of the Holy Scriptures; but, without any wish to strip him of either, I may remind him, that it becomes the champion of Juda to select the arms of warfare from the arsenal of Israel. He should not trust to Assyria, nor descend into Egypt, for succour, nor fight the battles of the Lord with the profane weapons of the Gentiles.

BIBLIOPHILOS.

LETTER XIII.

Δαίμονις, φθισεῖ σε τὰ σὺν μένος.—ILIAD.

“Thy dauntless heart (which I foresee too late),

“Too daring man, will urge thee to thy fate.”—DRYDEN.

It has been often remarked, nor has the frequency of the observation deterred from the repetition of the practice, that to divert attention from the principal point of debate, by detaining it on other topics, has been one of the usual artifices of controversy. To avoid such an imputation, I endeavoured, in my last letter, to give the present subject the simplest form it could assume. I was sparing of the introduction of every topic which might amuse the imagination, without satisfying the judgment of my readers. I fancied that I had thus narrowed the scene of contest, and that my adversary and I might meet, by gradual and nearer approaches. But what was my surprise, when, after the perusal of a letter, which, if I am to judge by the time consumed in its composition, is more entitled to the ambiguous compliment of elaborate than mine, I could scarcely discover a sentence that could

deserve the name of argument. After travelling over the dark legends of Gothic mythology, and exhausting much mirth and facetiousness on his favourite subject, he seems to forget or fear his former opponent, and turns on the other correspondents of the Register, to discharge on them the vial of a sportful and merciless irony.

Of the labours of these gentlemen, whom, after all, it cannot be reproachful to call associates, I am induced to abstain equally from praise or censure, lest the one should be ascribed to the partiality of an ally, or the other imputed to the jealousy of a rival. With their merits or demerits my cause is totally unconnected. I beg leave, therefore, to pass quickly over the barren ground; but, in passing over, I may be permitted to drop a tear over the fate of my fallen brothers of the war; or rather to hope, if the sleep of death is not come upon them, they will again start to arms and revenge at the call of Bibliophilos.

I thought I had already divested the subject of every personal complexion, by resigning to my adversary the uncensured privilege of collecting his materials from any quarter. Again, however, he takes occasion to fasten on my unsparing use of poets and profane writers. He is not the first, indeed, that has felt that truth is not the less caustic by being conveyed in the golden cadence of numbers. If, instead of concealing my

obligations by melting them into the mass, I have broken the current of my composition by their insertion, he may exult that his own, like the sullen stream of Arethusa, refuses the taint or refinement of the exotic mixture. I have, indeed, complimented him on the complaisance of his manner. Without meaning to retract it, I must observe that his language, which before was cold and ceremonious, has risen in the course of the contest to a due temperature of heat and animation. I should be sorry to inflict a willing pang on any individual; but, alas! it is one of the unavoidable results of arms. If, then, the weakness of his cause has not been able to resist the thrust of the enemy, I must soothe his troubled spirit by reminding him, that the stately politeness of the most courteous of the sons of chivalry, did not always protect him against the rude shock of his assailants.

I should be unreasonable, indeed, if I did not make allowance for the warmth inspired in the combat; I even give him credit for the ingenuity with which he endeavoured to disguise it. He recommends to me a cool and dispassionate tone; and, conscious that he has himself been betrayed into a slight immoderation, he is earnest in his censure, like the valorous Falstaff, who, by the repetition of "plague upon all cowards," laboured to cover the shame of his own recreancy. As to

his reflections on my vanity, it is through the mirror of his own mind that he must view that of his opponent. He may hear with rapture the music of his own praise, while he may rest assured it is not the motive of the labours of Hierophilos. His secrecy happily secures him against the false flattery of any discerning friends ; but, were he disposed to be vain, the praise bestowed by an acute foe, who was not in the mood of compliment in spite of the censure with which it is mingled, he should not look upon as the least equivocal approbation. While Bibliophilos then deplores the fate of those who have committed their fame to the frail memorial of the Register, posterity may regret that he has not chosen a more durable mausoleum for the preservation of his own.

I am almost ashamed to have detained my readers so long from the main question. Such, however, would be the tenor of my whole letter, were I to follow the footsteps of my opponent. As to the Education Society, in mercy to its character, let us bury it in profound silence. Waving any discussion on the genuineness of Lord Cloncurry's speech, Bibliophilos has himself revealed the indiscreet secret. If the sensitiveness of conscious guilt, discovered in my gentle insinuation the charge of embezzlement, the public will undoubtedly thank him for the justness of the commentary.

When first I engaged in this important discussion, I was unwilling to give it the features of a religious controversy. Viewing it in its connexion with the peace of my country, I was anxious to direct those who might be interested in its welfare, to unrol the volume of history, and to contemplate, according to the maxims of the Roman historian, the danger of the present system registered in its records. I might marshal texts of Scripture to prove its obscurity and array a host of Protestant polemics, who have acquiesced in the same truth.

Conscious of the general insipidity and occasional harshness of religious discussion; aware that it was too weighty a subject for the vehicle of a Journal; and unwilling to treat it with the dryness of a special pleader, I gladly declined the irksome and uninviting task. But now that it is pretended, by one of the ablest advocates of the Bible system, that the question turns on the respective authorities of the Church and the Scripture; and that I am reluctantly drawn to the discussion, I may be allowed to ask Bibliophilos, — Does he seriously imagine that a book so comprehensive in its matter, so elliptical in its language, and so dark in its mysteries, was ever intended to be the sole guide of the bulk of mankind, who, notwithstanding every effort, must be ignorant from the necessity of their condition?

Does he imagine that Christ, who came to dissipate the errors into which the fancies of philosophers had plunged the world, would have abandoned his own revelation to the licentiousness of man's caprices? Does he imagine that he would have instituted a church without a ruler—a sacrifice without a priesthood—and sacraments without a ministry? Or, that the naked Scriptures supply the place of church, and priests, and sacraments, and penance, and all the ordinances of religion? For, mark, such is the consequence of a system that releases man from every external control. Does he imagine that Christ, abandoning the example of every wise legislator, would have left laws, that have neither eyes to see, nor ears to hear, nor tongue to speak, without the informing spirit of a living authority, to illustrate their difficulties, enforce their observance, or avenge their violation? No,—the paradox is too revolting to human reason. It is only fit for the raised imaginations of the saints who are sighing for the approaching millenium. Never did a sect practically adopt the tenet. Like every topic of popular delusion, it favours, for a time, the purposes of the designing. In the struggles of contending parties, the Scriptures become the theme of the religious, as liberty of the political fanatic. But, when the work is done, it is dispensed with, as a superfluous, or dreaded, as a dangerous engine,

and the revolutionary conventicle guards its ephemeral existence, by wielding the stolen thunders of the Catholic Hierarchy.

For how can she constrain them to obey,
Who has herself cast off the lawful sway?
If she reform by text, ev'n that's as plain,
For her own rebels to reform again.

He may call this Catholic declamation ; but it is the declamation of truth and feeling. He may gravely tell us, that we are not to inquire into the line of conduct that Christ should have adopted, but regulate our views by what he has revealed. He may then repeat the solemn and frigid observation, that the Scriptures are clear. Yes, they are clear ; and, confining myself to what Christ has taught, they clearly tell us, that, “ as Christ was sent by his Father, so he sent his Apostles, promising to be with them to the end of the world ;” * that, “ he that despiseth them, despiseth Christ ;” † that he that hears not the Church, is to be as a Heathen and a Publican ;” ‡ that, “ to Peter were given the keys of the kingdom of Heaven ;” § and the power to “ feed the lambs and sheep—the people, and the pastors of the Church ;” || and that Christ “ gave some to be Apostles, and some Prophets, and others Evan-

* S. Matthew, c. 28, v. 18, 19, 20. † S. Luke, c. 10, v. 16.

‡ S. Matthew, c. 18, v. 17. § S. Matthew, c. 16, v. 19.

|| S. John, c. 21, v. 16, 17.

gelists, and others Pastors and Teachers, for the work of the ministry, that we may not be carried away with every wind of doctrine, by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness, with which they lie in wait to deceive.”*

With the evidence of these texts flashing on his eyes, how can he deny the actual existence of a teaching order of men, rising in regular gradation, to guard the faith of the people against the contagion of impostors. But, if the meaning of these passages is still controverted, as he will not, in the fullness of his modesty, deny to the Catholics the common privilege of interpretation, he must adopt the alternative of the obscurity of the Scriptures, or the pertinacity of the disputants. He may choose what conclusion best suits his purpose. Either inference equally establishes the necessity of an unerring arbiter, by whose decision they should abide.

Bibliophilos is not ignorant, that the Christian religion is not the discovery of human reason. It has been imparted by Heaven, in compassion for its weakness. It is, then, a subject on which the powers of the human mind can throw no light; its labours must, therefore, be confined to the examination of the purity of the medium that preserved it. This single remark exposes

* Ephesians, c. 4, 11, 12, &c.

the fallacy of the current observations on the progress of liberality. There are many departments of philosophy as yet unexplored. Over these the human mind may range unrestrained, pushing her conquests with the ardour inspired by her triumphs, until every science is led captive in her train. But, religion has its fixed boundaries; the Almighty has said, "hitherto thou shalt come, and no farther;" and he that disregards the divine prohibition, must pay the forfeit of his own temerity.

The liberality, then, which would outstep the boundaries fixed by our Fathers, is licentiousness. Any improvement in religion is corruption. As revealed religion, then, is a sacred deposit, it must be preserved by a series of unimpeachable witnesses, who transmit it to their successors with a religious fidelity. Without this traditionary authority, what certainty have the faithful of the inspiration of the mysterious volume, or how can they have a tranquil assurance of the divinity of their religion? Thus by discarding authority, you sunder the intermediate link that connects the Scripture with a divine origin.

I could cite numberless Protestant writers, in proof of this assertion; however, I shall content myself with two, and clothe myself for a moment in their armour.

*Mutemus clypeos, Danaumque insignia nobis
Aptemus.*

As the comprehensive orthodoxy of Bibliophilos will, undoubtedly, rank those writers within the pale of the Church, he will not surely reproach me with "trusting to Assyria for succour, or fighting the battles of the Lord with the profane weapons of the Gentiles;" though, really, it matters little whether the man of Gath be slain by the sling of his opponent, or the faulchion drawn from his own scabbard.

"He that will not submit to the concurrent evidence of the Fathers and Councils, may bring into controversy the divine authority of the inspired writings, Infant Baptism, Episcopacy, the Lord's day, and so blow up at once the Catholic faith and church."—*Dr. Hickes's Christian Priesthood*, vol. 1, page 145.

"It remains that we affirm whatever the whole church from the beginning hath received and practised for the rule of faith and manners, all that to be evidently true, by the same reason for which we believe the Scriptures."—*Thorndyke's Epilogus*, b. I, c. 6, p. 35.

But why quote authorities, or why close our eyes on the melancholy evidence of history? Is it not to the opposite principle that we can trace the clouds of sectaries that have floated, in dark succession, over the fair face of Christianity, dimming its divine lustre in their transient obscuration?

These few arguments, from the necessity of an authority, the evidence of its actual existence, the admission of Protestants, and the analogy which is furnished by experience, may afford some exercise to the controversial talents of Bibliophilos. Unless he disproves its existence, it is unnecessary to justify its exercise, or dwell more fully on the ill-understood, and much abused tenet of Catholic intolerance. He may call the doctrine antiquated; for aught I know, he may qualify some other solemn tenets with the same name. For the present, then, I will only observe, that I am ignorant of the scale by which he has measured his theological creed. But, I beg leave to assure him, that, if it has not risen to the highest point of scepticism, others, of larger liberality, will equally deplore the narrowness of his mind, and the intolerance of his system.

As my letter is already sufficiently long, little remains to be said with regard to the spirit of the Catholic Church and Clergy, concerning the diffusion of the Scripture. Happily, however, it requires not much labour to disentangle the question from the perplexity in which the narrow and discordant views of some have involved it, and to shew that the spirit and practice of both are in the most perfect unison. Her uniform conduct, then, is to extend the perusal of the Scriptures to the people. In support of the assertion,

I might adduce the authority of the present Pontiff; nor will Bibliophilos be able to produce any example of a prohibition, unless when offered by the insidious, for the purpose of perversion. In such circumstances the Church, conscious of the awful trust reposed in her, cannot resign the assertion of her own rights. Thus, when the mind of Europe became fevered with the immedicable mania of reformation, no wonder that the Church should labour to arrest its progress. If, then, we find a temporary and qualified prohibition of the Scriptures, such prohibitions are to be considered as exceptions to the general rule; but, if the danger should continue or revive, the Clergy are only the faithful organs of the Church, in cautioning the people against the seduction. When, therefore, in a period of religious frenzy, the Church prohibits the sacred volume, she is actuated by the same wise policy that directs the vigilance of Government to the movements of the seditious, lest the arms which are given the citizens for the defence of their lives, should be pointed against the bosom of the state, by the fury of the radical reformers.

Had her views been seconded, we would have been spared many a tale at which modesty would blush, and humanity would shudder. Had he studied with more attention the history of the Church, or even read the short treatise of St. Au-

gustine, which I recommended, I might have been saved the trouble of this vindication. But, why speak of St. Augustine? He has given up the Fathers, as hard work, and, as if tired with the toil of his former researches, he seems to have since sought repose by holding high converse with the mighty shades of Montalvo and Lobeira.

After this view of the motives that guided the councils of the Church, it is superfluous to defend the Irish Clergy against his dark insinuation. A generous foe should not thus covertly attack an order of men, who are shielded from reproach by the blameless tenor of their lives. I am unworthy to be their eulogist; but, if any one is still ignorant of the heroic virtues of the Clergy of Ireland, let him but pause over the scenes of most tragic interest in her story, and he will find, that when Catholic education was a crime, and the Catholic priesthood was felony; when war had wasted her fields, and her children sought shelter in her mountains, they walked forth, like the Baptist, robed in the weeds of lowliness and penance, pouring the consolations of the Pastor's voice across the wilderness of their country.

HIEROPHILOS.

LETTER XIV.

SIR :—If I were not prevented by indisposition, I should have willingly taken an earlier notice of the last replication of Hierophilos. As that writer is not altogether content with the “ambiguous compliment of elaborate,” I have great pleasure in bestowing on his composition, in the present instance, the higher praise of excellence. It will not suffer by a comparison with any of the antecedent letters that have borne his signature—it maintains the same beauty and vigor of thought, with the same elegance, and smoothness of expression, enhanced by a diminution of the blemishes by which they were occasionally disfigured. I can dwell with double satisfaction on the general amelioration of his manner : for, in spite of the allusion to the worthless and luxurious Falstaff, and of the observations by which it is accompanied, it must be manifest to the readers of Bibliophilos, that the improvement is largely due to the influence of his advice and exhortation. After this just tribute to the merit of my adversary, I may be allowed to pass to the less agreeable duty of unravelling his arguments, and correcting his mistakes.

Hierophilos begins by a remark, which is very true, and which, as I apprehend, it is verified in himself, I beg leave to recommend to his own consideration. I must plead innocent to the charge of detaining the attention of my readers on topics irrelevant to the subject of discussion. Unless I am deceived, the three points originally in dispute, were—the conduct of the agents employed by the enlightened Society for the Education of the Poor of Ireland;—the address of Mr. North, at the memorable meeting in Kildare-street; and the general plans of the Society, in reference to the introduction of the Bible into the schools within the sphere of their control. Against these, were directed the first and sharpest attacks of Hierophilos; and, though it becomes me to speak with modesty of his opponent, I may be allowed to say, that his defence has been deemed by many, both honourable and successful. On the first point, Hierophilos has again repeated the foul charge of peculation; and with more ingenuity than candor, attempted to make a last impression, by directing against the honour of the Society the arm that was raised in its defence. Much more manly would it be to abandon the odious impeachment, than endeavour to establish it by so discreditable an artifice. The second point is altogether given up, unless by a

writer,* whose friendship or enmity is scarce worth the notice of either party.

The true bearing of the third point, notwithstanding the laborious simplification of Hiero-

* Veridicus. This changeling Paladin figured at length in the Weekly Register of the 15th ult., and was distinguished by a hasty, though, perhaps, not inappropriate notice, in my last letter. Without the meek and noble gallantry, he betrays all the knightly eccentricities of Conrad, or Almanzor. In one species of tactics, indeed, in coarse and indecent language, he is an ample proficient. "Bible-man, pur-lieus of Channel-row, devil, saint" (a pretty word for derision), and the like, he uses with the easy dexterity with which the Yorshireman bolts his pork. Such expressions, to be sure, like the particles of the Greek tongue, contain no great meaning of their own, but then they give a wonderful energy to the style, and a bewitching raciness to the periods of a dexterous writer. As the acquirements of Veridicus in Greek are, probably, slender, I refer him to Hierophilos for the necessary explanation.

The other volunteers in the service, Hierophilos has properly abandoned to their fate. He affects, indeed, to commiserate their fall, and calls them to arms, and to vengeance; but, satisfied with the Elysium which their virtues had won, or discovering, in the sarcastic pity of a pretended friend, the disguised hostility of a bitter foe, they have been sullenly deaf to his evocation. M. W. indeed must be considered an exception. Whilst the gaunt macilency (*a*) of his attenuated form evidently bespeaks the inhabitant of another world, the extraordinary nature of his visit will demonstrate his unextinguishable ardor in the cause, or it will perhaps afford a new proof of the ruthless obduracy of the nether ferryman. Both to grace its figure, and to scare the lovers of the Bible, the apparition has kirtled itself in the mantle of Fenelon. With such an antagonist, my ignorance of unearthly stage-tricks forbid me to engage: I shall, therefore, commit the spectre to the care of some more potent demonologist.

(*a*) From two bulky columns, he has, in his last, dwindled down to five or six lines.

philos, is, I fear still misapprehended, or misstated, by that gentleman. After having “dise ntangled the question from the perplexities in which it was involved,” and having been invited by Bibliophilos to its dispassionate discussion, I naturally expected he would have made some effort to demonstrate the general use of the Scriptures, as contemplated in the plans of the Society, unprofitable or injurious to the people of Ireland; and, instead of an eulogy of the private virtues of his clergy, have endeavoured to justify the conduct by which, in violation of the spirit of their church, they decry and interdict the sacred volume. In my second letter, I pointed out a few of the benefits likely to result from a more intimate acquaintance with the sublime and unadulterated morality of the Bible—benefits of which, if we are to credit the assertions* of a respectable

* See “A Proposal for the Advancement of Christian Knowledge,” &c. We learn from a note in the letter of Mr. Parnel to the Quarterly Review, that the writer of the pamphlet is the Rev. I. Doyle, a Roman Catholic clergyman. The statements and conclusions, contained in this little work, coincide as exactly with those of the enlightened senator, as if they were intended to support his particular views and opinions on the Irish character. Hierophilos, who cannot endure the “shapeless mass” of Bible reports, may feel disgusted at a reference to such an authority. I must, however, exhort him to be less fastidious. If he will have accurate information on the true state of the country, he must submit to the irksome drudgery of seeking it where it may be found. To a person interested in the inquiry, and who has

minister of the Catholic religion, the community stands, at this moment, in the utmost necessity. I ventured, also, to express some regret at the policy which the pastors of the Roman Church seemed determined to pursue on the subject. Instead of meeting these weighty and important difficulties "in full front," by disproving the advantages of perusing, or extenuating the guilt of withholding the Scriptures, Hierophilos, in reply, has favoured his readers with a dissertation on the obscurity of the inspired writings, and an eloquent vindication of the private character of his clergy : topics on which, indeed, he proves himself a powerful advocate ; but on which, in reality, Bibliophilos writ nothing since he first took a part in the controversy. I never could be understood to believe, that there are not intricacies and obscurities in the Bible, through which it might not be desirable to have the assistance of an experienced guide ; but, where is such a guide to be found ? Is Hierophilos ignorant that the wise and the learned of every age, and even of the Catholic Church, have differed in numberless expositions ? Where so few are agreed, unanimity cannot be expected, nor, indeed, can

been long familiarized to "the heavy pages of Polus and Lightfoot," productions of this nature ought not to appear indigested nor repulsive.

it be considered necessary. Dismissing, then, the vain hope of conciliating the opinions of all, on matters on which it is likely the virtuous and the good will be for ever divided, let those to whom the country is dear strenuously co-operate in recommending to the innumerable passages of the Scriptures an attention, which cannot fail to ensure the greatest of national blessings—the moral improvement of our people.

To the rejection of authority, in the interpretation of the divine volume, Hierophilos ascribes the heavy “clouds that have floated in gloomy succession over the fair face of Christianity.” The light of history should have taught him to trace the obscuration to other causes. I refer him even to the writers of his own communion, for the true explanation of the phenomenon. From the candid among them he may learn, that the darkness which brooded for ages over Europe was caused, not by the rejection of authority, which it is well known was then carried to the uttermost height of illimitable extravagance, but by the ignorance and contempt of the Scriptures; by the depreciation and unfrequency of learning; by the rude barbarism and unbounded licentiousness of the people; and by the vicious artifices and unsated avarice of the clergy. If the luminary again dispense light and heat to man, thanks to the illustrious reformers of the

sixteenth century. To their labours the candid and discerning mind will ever attribute the return of the benign orb, to its ancient glory and pristine effulgence.

The “Fathers,” it would seem, “have abandoned my standard,” but as their desertion is most probably owing to the arts by which Hierophilos has seduced their fidelity, he should not surely reproach me with their defection, nor exhort me to the ridiculous expedient of supplying their ranks by such heroes as Montalvo and Lobeira. After all, however, could Hierophilos depend on the allegiance, is it not surprising, he did not use the service of these auxiliaries, to harass my retreat?

I shall, for the present, take leave of Hierophilos, with esteem for his talents, and respect even for his prejudices. In a mind so capable of discriminating, and, apparently, so much under the influence of its convictions, to induce a change of opinion would be a hopeless task; but whilst I regret the condition of our mortality, by which the wise and the virtuous are frequently dissociated on Religion, I am consoled by the belief, that there is no eternal distinction but between good and evil, and am encouraged by the assurance of “glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons

with God." *Epistle to the Romans, chap. 2, verse x, xi.* Report is often unfounded, and conjecture is frequently hazarded in vain; but if public fame say true, the letters on which I have remarked, have come from the pen of one elevated in the Catholic Hierarchy of the country, and surely his talents would confer a lustre on the highest station. But whatever be the condition of the writer, I shall not admire nor esteem him the less; and should he, at a convenient opportunity, be disposed to extend the honour of his acquaintance, I shall feel most gratified in the intercourse of more undisguised communication.

BIBLIOPHILOS.

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LETTER XV.

Πειθώ μὲν γὰρ ὀνειράρ, ἔρις δ' ἔριν ἀντιφύτευει.—PHOCYLIDES.

“ Strife kindling strife, inflicts a deadly smart,

“ While soft persuasion steals upon the heart.”

The Public has been favoured, at length, with another epistle of Bibliophilos. After the candid and pacific temper which he displays, together with an intention of retiring from the contest, it would be ungenerous to treat him with hostility. Still, the interest of truth may require that I should rectify his misapprehensions.

Having bestowed very high compliments on the superior excellence of my last letter, he ascribes, with evident complacency, much of the real, or fancied improvement, to the influence of his own admonition. I should be sorry to deprive him of such an innocent cause of vanity. But, perhaps, on reflection, he might be induced to ascribe the imaginary amendment to a calmness which was not to be disturbed by his provocation. On finding that the intemperance of his opponent

was not likely to furnish a theme for ridicule; and dreading, perhaps, that his favourite weapons might be successfully pointed against him, he has been induced to resume the former dignity of his style. Without, however, wasting time on a subject comparatively uninteresting, it is impossible not to admire the playful versatility of this writer; who, after drawing me into an extensive field of discussion, dexterously eludes the arguments with which he was unwilling to grapple, and shifts the last scene of the controversy to the sixteenth century, for the purpose of pronouncing a fervid panegyric on the labours of the reformers.

Similar is the artifice, by which he endeavours to turn the arms of his adversaries against each other. After failing by open force, he has had recourse to stratagem, and flings the torch of discord among his opponents, by insinuating that Hierophilos is their secret foe, or that he shews his friendship like the elephants of Pyrrhus, whose undistinguishing rage had trodden upon their friends as well as on their enemies. Surely they will not listen to the insidious suggestion. He frankly confesses that the Fathers have deserted his standard. Yet, I know not why he should complain that I have not pressed his retreating steps, unless he were conscious of being

formidable, even in his flight, by displaying the dangerous dexterity of the Parthian.*

To illustrate the advantage of the perusal of the Scriptures, he directs my attention to the sixteenth century, and exhorts me to contrast its splendour with the darkness of the preceding period. My curiosity is then solicited to some of the writers of my own creed, who have confessed the magnitude of the abuses that oppressed the Catholic Church. Without mentioning the names of those from whom he has probably drawn his information, it must be confessed that there have been some writers, who, affecting to rise above the tameness of their cotemporaries, abjured the spirit of the religion, of which they retained the profession, and fancied they were displaying a superiority of intellect by the freedom of their censures on the Church which they dishonoured. Yet, they have generally distinguished between the faults of men, and the abuses incorporated with religion. They have not justified the temerity that would deny the doctrine of indulgences, on account of the ignorant exaggerations of some of its abettors; nor applauded the insubordinations that would annihilate the Pope's spiritual supremacy, on account of the rapacity of some of his ministers.

* Parthumque fidentem fuga versisque sagittis.—(Virgil, Georgic III).
Terga conversi metuenda Parthi.—(Seneca Œdip).

In return, I beg leave to refer him to the candid, as well as illiberal Protestant writers,* who have shewn how little of the light of the sixteenth century is to be traced to the reformation. It sprung from other causes, over which the reformers had no control;—the invention of printing—the impulse given to the human mind by the spirit of commercial enterprize, and the discovery of new nations—but chiefly, to the fall of Constantinople in the preceding century, from which the seeds of science were scattered over Europe, and reared in the Italian soil, by the cultivation of the Bishops of Rome. Hence Bolingbroke, speaking of the liberality with which learning was encouraged by the Fifth Nicholas, and the other Pontiffs of the illustrious

* Of the latter class, see Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, 12th vol. 66th chapter. Of the former class, see Roscoe's *Life of Leo X.* 1st and 4th vols. octavo edition.

It is with pleasure I introduce the name of this learned and candid Author, who, in a work embracing much of these invidious topics, so warmly agitated between Catholics and Protestants, has kept the balance with a firmer hand than writers of much more pompous pretensions to neutrality. In the fourth volume he shews what little effect the reformation had upon literature, if we except the polemical tracts, which were calculated to exasperate, rather than humanize the temper of the times. In the first, he gives a narrative of the learned men who formed societies in Rome and Naples in the 15th century, and shews that learning was already shedding a strong and steady light over Europe, before its peace was disturbed by the sound of the reformation.

house of the Medici, makes an observation more deserving of the gratitude than the irony of a generous mind, that the "Popes were the first to touch the talisman that dissolved the fabric of their own greatness." To those, then, who have not examined their characters, and scrutinized their motives, he may extol the merit of the worthies of the reformation. He will, however, excuse me if, on the faith of history, I should represent them as men whose religion was profaneness, whose politics were anarchy, and whose morality was licentiousness.* Men, whose renowned chief reformed the discipline of the cloister by a double violation of its most solemn engagements, and, like his predecessor of Mecca, of still more daring impiety,

Then beckons some kind Angel, from above,
With a new text to consecrate their love.

Indeed it is unfortunate for the advocates of the Bible to have the merits of the first abettors of the system, the subject of such frequent animadversion. It is unwise in them to impose on their

* I could illustrate every member of this sentence, by a peculiar reference to each of the reformers. Without drawing on my fancy, I could exhibit the edifying pictures they drew of each other. But I should dread to offend the delicacy of my readers, by such disgusting representations; for, such is the coarseness of their expressions, that it could not be endured by the decency of modern manners, or the dignity of modern language.

adversaries the hard necessity of offending some of their dearest prejudices, by exhibiting the true characters of the reformers to the gaze of the world. Better let them sleep in peace, until the lurid glare of their vices is lost in time; and when, like the predatory founders of ancient cities, their memory recedes into legendary dimness, then may they exalt them to the honours of an apotheosis.

But what are the advantages that resulted from an indiscriminate perusal of the Scripture?—History has recorded them in all the wild varieties of error. When Luther first arose, he preached to the people the widest latitude of religious faith, adjuring them to appeal to the Bible only, as their creed, and their conscience as its interpreter. For a while he was heard as an oracle, and enjoyed a monopoly of apostleship. Soon, however, the success of the reformer diffused among his disciples the spirit of a dangerous rivalry. They, too, erected the standard of revolt, and divided with the patriarch the allegiance of his followers. His haughty soul was mortified by the partition of his empire. In vain did he threaten to rivet the chains which he struck off; in vain did he appeal to the evidence of the divine word; the divine word was mute, and its fragments were idly brandished against each other, by the adverse fury of the sectaries. All who addressed

the people confidently appealed to the Scripture, to give a sanction to their own pretensions, and inveighed against the despotism of a church which could not sustain the test of inquiry.

The artifice was not novel ; it has been practised in every age, and has betrayed into the errors of the Manicheans the inquisitive mind of St. Augustine. I will take occasion to quote the affecting passage at a future period. Still the artifice succeeded ; the people were loosened from the holding of the ancient faith, and drifted for three hundred years on the tide of human opinion, without being able to find a resting place.

As if aware of the inevitable consequences of such a system, he gives up the hope of union, and inquires in a tone of despondence, where a directing authority is to be found ? He may recollect that I have already shewn its necessity and existence. He may recollect that Christ commands acquiescence in its decisions, under the most awful denunciations. I will, therefore, content myself now with observing, that a tribunal, to which Christ commanded all to appeal, cannot be inaccessible ; and that a Church, of which he requires all to be members, cannot be obscure in its characters, or difficult in its approaches. The sincere inquirer after truth may soon discover a large society, invested with the splendid characters of

the true Church, and justly likened, by Christ himself, to a city on the mountain top, lighting, by the blaze of its watch-tower, the steps of the wanderer. Really the conclusion of his own letter should furnish, in my mind, the strongest proof of this authority. Unable to extricate himself from the difficulties resulting from its rejection, he is obliged to extend salvation indiscriminately to the professors of every creed; and, by one dash of his pen, to efface every feature between a Christian and an Infidel.

Such are the lamentable lengths to which modern liberality conducts its votaries; and hence, their severity against the stern intolerance of the Catholic Church. As the length of my present letter prevents me from pressing the subject, I may soon take occasion of giving a fair and accurate view of this appalling tenet. It may be useful to correct the mistakes, not only of the Protestants, but of some of my Catholic brethren, to shew that the interests of truth are not incompatible with true liberality; and that the strong conviction of its possession, instead of relaxing the charities of the human heart, has given, in every age, the strongest spring to its benevolence. I would exhort Bibliophiles to consider well the boundaries between science and religion; and to consider, that great improvement in the one is often associated with great errors in

the other. Hence, when I reflect, that the country on which Tacitus bestowed the epithet of *despectissima pars servientium* was the sole repository of Heaven's revelation, while Rome sat in darkness, I can listen with pity to the invectives of a neighbouring nation against the religious ignorance of our own. Nay, when I contemplate the singular lot of that nation, poised in the happy mean between democracy and despotism,—enriched with the treasures of every art, and ennobled by the conquest of every science—her chief city “the mart of the nations, and her traders the nobles of the earth,”—still more agitated by religious factions than the waves that are breaking around her cliffs, I am obliged to characterize her in the language of one of the divinest of our own bards:

A wand'ring bark, upon whose pathway shone
All stars of Heav'n, except the guiding one.

And now that my adversary, on retiring, has been pleased to express a desire of a more unreserved correspondence; if he means a private interview, I should gladly meet his wishes, if I thought it would lead to any satisfactory results. If he means, however, that I should give my name to the public, I beg leave to decline the proposal, though I purpose to give expression to no sentiment which I would be ashamed to avow.

While I must consider his conjectures highly flattering, he may rest assured, that whatever be the station of Hierophilos, he has written with the impression, that, where there is argument, it wants not the aid of the magic of a great title; and where there is none, no title can supply its deficiency. He feels that, in other contests, the actors may well exhibit themselves to the admiration or ridicule of the public; but that religious controversy is too sacred a subject for vanity to presume to thrust her little figure into the foreground.

Unwilling, then, to dissipate the conjectures that are collecting around any individual, he is content with the soft obscurity of a private character, and smiles at the competition of his cotemporaries, to jostle into fame. If my adversary has determined to take his final leave, it is only justice to his merit to acknowledge, that he has written, in defence of his cause, with elegance and ingenuity. He may be convinced that I will always respect the honest convictions of a liberal mind; and, perhaps, derive some satisfaction from the assurance, that I have given to the candour and acquirements of Bibliophilos, a notice, which, on harsher provocation, I refused to the graduated sons of the university.

I may be permitted, however, to pursue my original purpose, of denouncing the designs of the

Bible Societies, and cautioning my Catholic countrymen against the treachery of their friendship. To throw some light upon the subject, it may be necessary to inform the public, that a meeting of the Sunday-School Societies took place at the Rotunda, on the 19th of April last. It would naturally be expected, that the proceedings of men who pretend to act upon the most honourable principles, would be accessible to my curiosity. Yet strange to say, I was denied admittance, on pretence of having no ticket; but to shew, that by this was meant a positive exclusion, where I was directed to for a ticket, none could be procured. This is the boasted publicity of their proceedings. I suppose they profited by the indiscretion of the Kildare-street meeting; and, finding it made the subject of discussion by the profane pen of Hierophilos, they were resolved to protect their own against any sacrilegious intrusions. Hence, the mysteries of Eleusis were never guarded with a more jealous vigilance. But, they may rest assured, that no secrecy will secure their designs against detection and exposure. In the hope that some gifted writer would rise, to assert the majesty of the Catholic discipline and doctrine, against the dreams of these speculatists, I have listened in silence to their clamorous egotism ringing on my ears. The day, I trust, is not distant when my hopes

will be realized; but, in the mean time, they may be convinced, that I will occasionally watch their conduct, concluding, in the words of the pious Bishop of Alba, to whom literature is more indebted than the whole group of cotemporary reformers.

Induat in facies centum, centum ille figuras

Ipse adero retegamque dolos fœcundaque fraudis

Agmina disjiciam et magna virtute resistam.

HIEROPHILOS.

LETTER XVI.

Longe aliud studium atque alios adcincta labores

Non tamen absistam cœptum detexere munus.—VIRGIL.

“ Though other labours destin’d to pursue,

“ My promis’d purpose I shall keep in view.”

SIR, before I can be prevailed upon to return the salutations of the other personages who have condescended to solicit the correspondence of Hierophilos, it may be expected that I should conclude my observations on the letter of my late more talented, though, perhaps, less titled opponent.

I am willing to believe, that his remarks on the Catholic Church, were less the misrepresentations of an angry polemic, than the effusions of a heart teeming with benevolence to mankind. It is painful, then, to combat principles which, from their amiability, must have many admirers, and the writer who undertakes their refutation, must often array against him the kindest feelings of the human heart. Though there is no objection more frequently urged against the Catholic Church than its intolerance ; yet, there is none more destitute of argument, when stripped of the ex-

aggerations with which it has been generally invested.

The argument is generally addressed to the feeling or the fancy, rather than to the judgment of the reader ; and, as readers blessed with a slender share of judgment, may possess an abundant stock of either, it is not difficult to bring conviction to such understandings. Provided the writer possesses a peremptory tone of assertion, that he is capable of animating his composition with some eloquence, and sharpening it with some ridicule, and of infusing into the whole a seasonable portion of sensibility, he is sure, without one particle of argument, to lead captive the understandings of his readers. Hence, the hollow declamations of some modern speakers, about universal charity—a charity which, it is to be feared, evaporates, through its extent, and burns with little intensity for any individual ; and hence their unsparing invectives against the principle of exclusive salvation. More intolerant than the Church they condemn, they arrogate the right of exacting exclusive acquiescence to their opinions, and treat with a contemptuous compassion all those who would refuse to bow to the supremacy of their understandings.

Much of the misapprehension which exists on this subject, has arisen from confounding two principles that ought ever to be separated—*theo-*

logical and civil intolerance ; and as Catholics are known invariably to hold the one, the disingenuity of their enemies has connected with it the imputation of the other. The principle of civil intolerance, either as it regards sovereigns or citizens, forms no part of the doctrine of the Catholic Church, and that it is not practically illustrated in the lives of its members, their conduct in the interchanges of every social duty, with persons of every communion, bears ample and decisive evidence. It would be superficial, then, to rebut a charge which the evidence of their lives has more triumphantly refuted.

The other consists in this, that while Catholics are under the conviction that their church is the true one, they must necessarily hold that all who reject it are in error, and, of course, if it be wilful, liable to the awful consequences with which Christ has threatened their contumacy. Such is the tenet which has caused so much hostility against the Catholic Church ; such are the grounds on which we are reproached with impiously usurping the prerogatives of the Deity, and presumptuously deciding on the destinies of man. A few reflections will shew how unjust and inconsequent is the accusation.

It is remarkable in the discussion, that our adversaries begin at the wrong end of the argu-

ment, and reverse every principle by which they establish the truth of revelation. In discussing the evidences of Christianity, the Protestant as well as Catholic Apologists forcibly expose the absurdity of rejecting revelation from its repugnance with our prejudices.* Whatever may be our feelings, we are taught even by the soundest principles of the inductive philosophy to distrust them, when a doctrine, impressed with the character of a divine origin is offered to our acceptance. Yet this method, so consonant to reason, is abandoned by Protestants in their controversies about the Church, and instead of judging of its doctrine, by the natural method of first ascertaining its authority, they preposterously condemn that authority, because they cannot relish the severity of its tenets. Hence, their usual method is to exhibit the amiable toleration of their own Church in terms of the most fervent admiration, and after comparing it with the Catholic Church, to condemn the latter for its unfeeling austerity.

* Besides eminent Catholic Divines, whom I might cite on this subject; Dr. Chalmers, Presbyterian minister of Glasgow, has, in his *Evidences of Christianity*, ably reasoned on this subject. It is strange, what hidden charm could give force to his arguments, when applied to *some* mysteries, and render them feeble when extended to *others*! Alas! the force of prejudice which recurs to different weights and measures.

Were we to institute a comparison between political institutions, which human wisdom had contrived, or human power had erected, then one might be allowed to weigh their respective merits on the same principle, and praise the wisdom or arraign the folly of either institution. But the criterion that should direct us in our estimate of civil institutions, will be inadequate when applied to religious societies that lay claims to a divine origin. Whatever our notions of perfection may be, surely that society is entitled to the praise of superior excellence, which approximates nearest to the model which has been traced by divine wisdom.

From this principle it clearly follows, that our adversaries should check the freedom of their abuse, until they had inquired and ascertained what was the form of Government which Christ had instituted for his Church, what were to be the leading features of its character, and what the nature of that authority which was to guard the purity of the faith against the contagion of error. For in the supposition (doubtless a possible one) that Christ had established his Church, as the unerring arbiter to which private judgment should ultimately appeal, that he commanded all to obey it, under pain of sharing the fate of Heathens, and that he had invested it with ample powers to inflict its denunciations on the rebel-

lions sons who should refuse acquiescence to its authority; then the boasted system of religious liberty would be the open way to death, while the stern intolerance of the Catholic Church would directly lead to happiness and life. But to avoid being misunderstood, or misrepresented, religious liberty I take in opposition to theological, not to civil intolerance. Though it be true, that no human power can coerce the convictions of the human mind, which is beyond the reach of its penal sanctions, this principle is often pushed to an erroneous and dangerous conclusion. For here there is no question of the application of physical force or civil enactments, but of the existence of a moral obligation. Hence should it appear, that God has imparted to his Church a delegated authority; as the existence of authority imports the correlative obligation of obedience, it follows, that a contempt of its ordinances involves by implication an infraction of the law of God.

But is it not unfair to level, exclusively, against the Catholics, a weapon, with which Protestants are equally assailable? Nay, does not the principle of theological intolerance enter into the nature of every religious system? The Church of England, which embodies with its liturgy the Athanasian symbol, cannot admit within the pale of

the Church, or of salvation, the Socinians, who deny the Trinity. Although the principles of the latter are still more comprehensive, yet there is a boundary, which even their liberality would not presume to pass, and they scruple not to refuse the hope of pardon to all who deny the divine mission of the Messiah. Even the Deist, whose principles are scarcely characterized by any religious peculiarity, would tremble for the safety of the Atheist: and thus it is evident, that intolerance marks with stronger or fainter colours the tenets of every creed. The only difference, then, between the intolerance of Protestants and Catholics is this, that while the former is occasionally relaxed, and gently accommodated to the varieties of human opinion, the latter is always stretched to an invariable and uniform tension.

Surely a respect for truth, which cannot equally exist amidst discordant systems, must sanction this principle. A respect for the wisdom of Christ must authorize its adoption, unless we suppose him indifferent about the religion which he came on earth to establish. If the feeling of every individual is to be the standard of his faith, every distinction between truth and error will be confounded, and it will become a matter of equal indifference whether one believes or blasphemes the

Divinity of the Redeemer. But the principle would not stop at the destruction of revealed religion ; even the most sacred principles of morality would not escape its desolating influence. Our ideas of charity and intolerance are relative, and hence, the whining sensibility of novelists may be shocked at the uncharitableness of the Apostle, who excludes from the Kingdom of Heaven the votaries of those crimes to which their courtesy gives the softer name of fashionable follies. Nay, the doctrine of eternal torments itself, the profligate will not fail to rank among the dreams of superstition, which, while they alarm the fears of children and females, according to the language of the French Satirist, his superior courage may safely deride :

“ Un Libertin d'ailleurs qui sans âme et sans foi

“ Se fait de son plaisir une supreme loi,

“ Tient que ces vieux propos de demons et de flammes

“ Sont bons pour étonner des enfans et des femmes.”

Having shewn that the principle of the logical intolerance must attach to all religions that admit of any limit to their belief ; and that the principle which admits of none, must lead to their destruction ; having shewn, by striking contrast, the inconsistency of the charges that are preferred against the Catholic Church, and vindicated on the genuine principles of Christianity, the justice

of its general intolerant character, it is only fair to exhibit its mitigating features.

The Catholic Church is far from condemning, by a sweeping anathema, all who are not members of its visible body. She rationally considers that some may be secretly connected with the soul or nobler part of the church, who are not within the visible pale of her communion. Hence, without condemning those who are shut out from the church, by circumstances over which they have no control, and whose lot is left to the mercy of Heaven, she includes among her children all who are baptized, and prevented by a premature death from wilfully embracing error. Adopting the doctrine of St. Augustine, she absolves from the guilt of heresy, those who unconsciously inherit the errors of their fathers, and investigate the truth with a cautious solicitude, sincerely disposed to embrace it, however revolting to their prejudices. But though she acquits them of the crime of heresy, she does not indiscriminately extend to them the assurance of salvation. Who the persons are that may be comprehended in the class of this pious Father, it is beyond the reach of human sagacity to ascertain. That there are many, I should gladly hope, in compassion for human error. Yet it is much to be feared, that a mistaken liberality exaggerates their number. How-

ever, as this principle may be sometimes abused by a licentious interpretation, it is the duty of all, to ascertain whether they have fulfilled the condition it requires, of *investigating the truth with a sincere and cautious solicitude*, before they can hope to shield themselves by its application.

Such, if I am rightly instructed, is the doctrine of the Catholic Church, wisely tempering its salutary severity with a reasonable indulgence. Surely such a doctrine is not calculated to infuse or to nourish the poison of religious rancour. The persuasion that it is necessary to belong to the true Church, in order to obtain salvation, instead of rousing the resentment of the Catholic against his brother, is calculated to awaken feelings of an active and benevolent compassion.

The inaccurate notions, not only of Bibliophilos, but numberless others, have reluctantly induced me to dwell on this unpalatable subject. If I have succeeded in correcting any of the prejudices, and soothing any of the hostility so frequently manifested against our religion, I should rejoice at the prospect of reconciliation. If, on the contrary, I should have excited any hostile feelings—an effect which I sincerely deprecate, I must only remark, that truth is too sacred to be sacrificed to the hope of unanimity. In conclusion, though I deplore the existence of any angry recriminations on the subject of religion, I cannot

help observing, that I know not a greater solecism in language, than to call those uncharitable, who denounce errors which they know to be dangerous; while the epithet of charitable, is bestowed upon those who, under its specious name, are propagating a system of indifference, and betraying their fellow-men into a treacherous security.

HIEROPHILOS.

LETTER XVII.

Discite justitiam moniti.—VIRGIL.

“Warned, learn righteousness.”—DRYDEN.

SIR :—It is high time to redeem my promise of occasionally communicating my thoughts on the interesting subject which has already occupied so large a portion of the public attention. In deference to the momentous interest] which hitherto absorbed every other feeling, I suspended my correspondence. I fancied that the spirit of bigotry would have been abashed by a decent respect for more exalted sorrows, and that its murmurs would have been hushed in the stillness of the fear that fell upon the nation. But, alas! while the land may be rocked by an earthquake, it disturbs not the vexatious insects that are playing their little game upon its surface.

When first I ventured to offer my observations on the Bible Societies, I was aware that it was a hazardous undertaking to combat a system, which had engaged in its support much of the rank and opulence of the kingdom. The blessings of the Bible became the theme of every tongue ; its dif-

fusion was hailed as the purest emanation of benevolence, and opposition to its progress was denounced as a sacrilegious encroachment on the evangelical liberties of man. Hence, I was not allowed to proceed far when an attempt was made to arrest my progress, and my attention was turned to an opponent of the school of a noble writer,* whose playful nature seemed more at ease, when disporting itself with the lighter shafts of ridicule, than when cumbered by the weighty armour of reason. The arrogance of triumph must ever be offensive: it is a sure indication of an ungenerous mind. But as the result of the controversy is before the public, all have an opportunity of judging of the fairness of the charge, which imputes to a sinister policy, the well-judged opposition of the Catholic Priesthood. None are more sincerely anxious than they are, to extend the facilities of education to the poor. But, they should prove unfaithful to the trust reposed in them, were they to suffer the faith to be perverted, under the pretence of education.

Let it not be imagined that this is one of those speculative topics, which may be solely abandoned to the discussion of the curious, without affecting, in its issue, the vital interests of the community.

* Lord Shaftesbury, the celebrated author of the *Characteristics*, who would fain substitute ridicule for argument.

It has already excited the attention of men, high in station and character, in the country: and, such is become the magnitude of the subject, that it has formed a prominent figure in a charge which lately issued from the Bench. I gladly hail the introduction of a spirit that dictated, from the judgment seat, an address so pregnant with deep observation, and enlightened benevolence. Though too long to be here inserted, it is too valuable to be entirely withheld; nor shall I weaken the following passage, by exhibiting it through the medium of a commentary.

“ Whilst the leading men of the country laid their hands upon transgressors, and introduced them to condign punishment, he (Baron Smith) was satisfied they would *endeavour to do away the causes of transgression*, by promoting the education, the morals, the comforts, and the well-being of their lower orders, and removing, in the same degree, those temptations, and irritating provocatives to crime, which want, and ignorance, and wretchedness, and their attendant discontents, involve. As a main and sacred engine, for the accomplishment of these ends, he agreed with the laudable impressions of the present day, that the dissemination of religious instruction is of vast importance. But this instruction ought, in his opinion, to be dispensed in a way conformable to the tenets of those who were to receive it;

without any attempt at making proselytes, especially, without any attempts of an indirect description. —We are not to do evil that good might come of it: and, least of all, ought we, by the admixture of ingenious contrivance, to poison the streams of Christianity at the source; or taint, with any thing like imposture, the pure sincerity of religious truth.”

Such is the language in which one of the most enlightened ornaments of the Bench addressed the Jury of the county of Mayo. It is the sober language of a mind, placed above the prejudices that obscure, and the passions that pervert, the understandings of little individuals. May the gentry of that country profit by his Lordship's lecture; for it cannot be supposed that, with the accurate knowledge which he possessed of the state of the country, his Lordship would have so trifled with the Jury, on that solemn occasion, as to have addressed to them a supererogatory caution.

Hitherto, indeed, these gentlemen might plead a reasonable apology, as they were probably anxious to atone for the tardiness of their zeal, by the superior vigour of their exertions. They might have felt, that the Biblical spirit was nearly spent ere it reached that remote province; and as it did not come upon them until the eleventh hour, they aspired to the merit and reward of those who were early engaged in the contest.

Such an ardent effort of piety, however unseasonable, may be entitled to commendation. Yet, it were to be wished, that they were wise unto sobriety. They may now learn, that to prove their love of religion, or of country, it is not necessary to force the Bible upon the people. They may learn, that tranquillity may be preserved among them without offering violence to their consciences. They may learn, that attention to their comforts, together with education conformable to their tenets, is a surer way to promote their welfare, than any indirect attempts at proselytism.

Indeed the fierce effervescence of religious zeal is gradually subsiding among all who have any pretensions to refinement or liberality. It had its passing day among the revolving fashions that attract the public gaze, and command the public homage; but now it is consigned to the fate of many a waning custom, that lingers long in the extremities, after it is banished from the centre of polished society. Such, it is said, is the high-spiritedness of the gentry of Connaught, that they would indignantly repel the imputation of being behind in the improvements of the age: I should therefore recommend to them the speedy adoption of his Lordship's lessons, lest they should imitate those who provoke the public ridi-

cule, by displaying the faded finery of the metropolis.

It is remarked that evils, of which the existence is unquestionable, are often capriciously traced to a strange diversity of causes. The justness of this remark is strongly exemplified in the question under consideration. Although there are more obvious and palpable sources of the misery of our people, yet it is the policy of some to lay it to the account of ignorance, and then, by an easy consequence, to transfer it to the clergy. Yet it requires but little knowledge to perceive the disingenuous fallacy of such a representation. I will not, by any high-wrought picture of their distress, or the development of its causes, attempt to make them more sensitive to their wretchedness, and, consequently, more miserable. It is the duty of every good man, by holding up hopes of a better world, to soothe into resignation the fretfulness of their discontent. But, I must confess, that while I reflect on the numberless petty vexations which the Irish peasantry endure—vexations which from their local nature are beyond the reach of the Legislature, and within the influence of those who profess such an anxiety for improving their condition—and compare them with the mock remedies which are ostentatiously offered for their removal, I am reminded of the

lines in which the feeling poet of a neighbouring country describes another cast of mankind,

Trade, wealth, and fashion, ask you still to bleed,
And holy men give Bibles for the deed.*

Let the lay gentlemen, then, labour to dispense these comforts, of which they are the stewards, consigning the spiritual wants of the people to their legitimate pastors. Let the evils that are within the sphere of their benevolence be removed or mitigated. Let them administer education in a way conformable to the tenets of those who are to receive it; and, instead of alienating the people, by giving encouragement to illiterate apostates, let them generously co-operate with the clergy, who from station and confidence among the people, which has grown with ages, are the most competent to direct the course of instruction which will be most efficient and beneficial in its consequences. Should these lenitives fail to assuage the soreness of those evils that afflict our peasantry, it will then be high time to make an experiment on the latent efficacy of the Bible.

HIEROPHILOS.

* The Author of "The Pleasures of Hope."

LETTER XVIII.

TO THE MOST REV. DOCTOR MANNERS, ARCHBISHOP
OF CANTERBURY, AND PRIMATE OF ALL ENGLAND.

THE DIVORCE QUESTION.

Fæcunda culpæ secula, nuptias

Primum inquinavere, et genus, et domus.

Hoc fonte derivata clades

In patriam populumque fluxit.—HORACE.

“Fruitful of crimes, this age first stained

“Their hapless offspring, and profaned

“The nuptial bed; from whence the woes,

“Which various and unnumber’d rose;

“From this polluted fountain head

“O’er Rome, and o’er the nation spread.”—FRANCIS.

MY LORD :

December 2.

DURING the late portentous proceedings which have awed public curiosity, your Grace, and episcopal colleagues, stood out in too prominent an attitude not to attract and fix observation. As the question of Divorce embraced much of Ecclesiastical polity, it was naturally expected that the faithful would be enlightened by the wisdom, and confirmed by the accordance of the Hierarchy.

But, alas! these anticipations have been sadly frustrated, and the surprise and disedification that were feebly murmured among the Lords, have been long since loudly re-echoed through the empire.* It has been a subject of regret to some, of triumph to others, and of wonder to all, to see the heads of a religion, which hinges on the principle of the universal intelligibility of Scripture, arrayed in adverse ranks on a momentous question, involving in its general tendency the best interests of mankind, and, in this particular instance, the safety and the honour of the empire; disputing every inch of ground with Scripture authority, and thereby demonstrating to the world the obscurity of the sacred volume. For I will not, I cannot, my Lord, suppose that any unworthy bias or flexibility to power, could warp the judgment of men of such exalted station and sanctity. And hence, one cannot sufficiently express his indignation against those rash advocates of the Bible, who cannot defend its perspicuity without impeaching the integrity of its expounders.

Hitherto, whatever might be the opinion of the prelates, they uniformly affected the lan-

* Witness among others the speech of my Lord King, who sported a good deal of mirth and raillery at the expense of the Premier, until his seriousness was restored by the shock which his faith had sustained in the collision of the Prelacy.

guage of orthodoxy and concord, and, like the ancient philosophers, though they might inwardly disbelieve, they exteriorly revered the doctrines of the Church. But, it was only on this occasion that they scandalized the faithful, and edified the sectary, by sincerely revealing the mysteries of their own disunion.

I have heard, my Lord, of the distinction of essentials, by which, the lovers of subtlety more than of truth, have thought to elude the arguments of their adversaries. It will not, doubtless, be recurred to on this occasion, nor will it be deemed presumption to assert, that there is nothing essential in Scripture, if the doctrine of marriage does not form an essential point of Christian morality. It is not a speculative article, on which one could be supposed to err without danger, and propagate his errors without affecting the public repose ; it is a duty of every day's occurrence, connected with the happiness of almost every individual ; nor have the ministers of the establishment themselves aspired to such unearthly sanctity, as to be exempt from its obligations. It is, therefore, of vast importance to know, whether the marriage contract lasts for life, or only during the discretion of the parties ; and, whether we are to believe with his Lordship of Chester, that its ties are indissoluble, or, with your Grace of Canterbury, that adultery annuls its engagements.

On reading the report of your Grace's speech, I was not a little surprised to find a Minister of Christ, principally resting on the obsolete laws of Moses. However, it may appear consistent enough, that they who have abjured the living authority of the church, should appeal to the fallen power of the Synagogue. Still, I would expect from your Grace, that connected and enlightened view of legislation, which mounts to the origin, and catches the spirit of the law, flinging aside its exceptions, and not the heavy drudgery of a darkling critic, who fastens on a detached part, without comparing its effect with the symmetry of the whole. It is true, as appears from Deuteronomy (c. 24), that divorce was tolerated by the law of Moses. But, did this permission originally enter into the views of the Legislator; or was it not rather extorted by the stubbornness of a people, whom it was necessary to conciliate by indulgence to a compliance with the law? Hence, the practice of divorce was not so frequent among the Jews as it is generally, but erroneously imagined. Hence, it was uniformly marked as a licentious advantage, which was taken of the letter against the spirit of the law, and denounced by those who were raised up by the Almighty, to enforce its observance or punish its infraction. I might illustrate the truth

of these assertions by a reference to the purest period of the Jewish history : however, I shall content myself with citing the following passage of Malachy, which marks the indignation of the Almighty against this odious practice. “ And this again have you done, you have covered the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and bellowing, so that I have no more a regard to sacrifice ; neither do I accept any atonement at your hands. Because, the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, whom thou hast despised : yet she was thy partner, and the wife of thy covenant.” It is true, indeed, that towards the decline of the Hebrew Republic, the permission given by Moses had grown into a pernicious practice. But, this relaxation may be traced to another cause.

When we consider that the dispersion of the Jews, introduced to their acquaintance the profane wisdom of the East ; and that hence, they mingled more freely with nations, it will not be surprising if the purity of the law should have been adulterated by a mixture of exotic commentary. Then arose the celebrated schools of Hillel and Samaiah, of whom the latter confined the privilege of divorce to adultery, while the former abused the flexibility of the text, to an indefinite latitude of passion or caprice. The San-

hedrim was divided by the credit of these Doctors ;* and, we are told, that until the time of our Redeemer, the controversy still trembled between the alternations of either party.

I have asserted, that the liberty of divorce granted by Moses, was rather the effect of necessity than the spontaneous dictate of his wisdom. Such is the interpretation of Christ, who, while he explains the law of Moses, unfolds and propagates his own. And the Pharisees coming to him, asked him : “ is it lawful for a man to put away his wife ? tempting him. But he answering, saith to them, what did Moses command you ? And they said : Moses permitted to write a Bill of Divorce and to put her away. And Jesus answering said to them, because of the hardness of the heart, he wrote you that precept. But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife. And they shall be in one flesh. Therefore, now, they are not two but one flesh. *What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder !*” (Mark, c. 10.) I should now appeal to the candour of the unprejudiced, and ask what is the doctrine clearly conveyed in this language ? The Pharisees ask

* Seldon Uxor Ebraica, lib. iii, c. 18, 20, 22.

Christ, whether it is lawful for one to send away his wife? To obviate cavil, and to defeat that hostile spirit which so often lurked under a pretended reverence for the law, he asks what did Moses command? Then, after shewing that divorce was an imperfection which originated in temporary circumstances, he ascends to the origin, and developes the primitive institution of matrimony, shewing its indissoluble connection from the creation of only one of either sex—a connection, if we are to believe the Apostle (*Ephes. c. 5.*), which shadowed his own mystic union with his church; and concludes by proposing this original compact, instead of the permission of Moses, as the positive standard of his own law.

I should now ask, if the solitary text of St. Matthew (*c. 5.*) be sufficient to weaken the force of this reasoning? “But I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, excepting the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: And he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery.” St. Luke (*c. 16.*) agrees with St. Mark, and what determines the controversy the Apostle (*1 Cor. c. 7.*) expressly in the name of Christ, prohibits marriage, even in case of separation. What canon of criticism, then, can warrant us to bend the evidence of three clear and consistent testimonies, mutually supporting and illustrating each other, to an interpretation

of an ambiguous passage which is at war with the express principles of the legislator? But if there is an apparent ambiguity, the Catholic interpretation makes it accord with the tenor of the other Evangelists. The Catholic Church authorizes divorce, or rather repudiation, in case of adultery : a practice evidently warranted by the first part of the text of St. Matthew. Yet she teaches the indissolubility of marriage, a doctrine clearly deduced from the second part, compared with the other Evangelists ; nor shall I exhaust the patience or insult the understanding of my reader, by shewing the violence that is offered to language, in qualifying an absolute member of a sentence with a forced or fancied exception.

However, as if to satisfy the scruples and appease the pruriency of the grammarian, we are told that after his discourse with the Pharisees, Christ was again consulted on the same point by his disciples ; to whom he was in the habit of clearly explaining what he denied to the treacherous curiosity of the Pharisees, or only darkly delivered in mystery and parable. To them he thus solemnly addresses himself: “ Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another committeth adultery against her. And if the wife shall put away her husband and be married to another she committeth adultery.” (*St. Mark, c. 10*) Such, my Lord, is the conclusion of Christ

himself upon that important occasion, when he undertook to instruct the future teachers of his Church. And hence I am justified in expressing my surprise, that the exception of an imperfect and abrogated law should be converted by a Christian Prelate into the rule and practice of a perfect dispensation.

And now, my Lord, permit me to lay before you another proof of the truth of Catholic interpretation, in the demoralizing effects of the contrary doctrine. How different the idea of marriage in the Catholic and Protestant religion! In the one, we behold a contract exposed to all the waywardness of inclination and caprice; and in the other, a sacred connexion subsisting for life, exalted by religion, and, instead of being at the mercy of the passions, subduing and chastening their violence by its salutary control. The facility of divorce weakens the mutual desire of pleasing; a neglect of reciprocal attention soon creates indifference; indifference may ripen into disgust, and rankle into enmity, until the unhappy couple see no hope of release from a cruel bondage, except in mutual separation, and the prospect of new nuptials. Behold, then, the consequence:—a divorce must be effected,—adultery is a necessary step,—morality is sacrificed,—the nature of law is reversed,—and the apprehension, or rather, the hope of punishment,

operates as an incentive to the commission of the crime. What an unnatural state of society ! in which, according to the strong language of Seneca,* people marry for the sake of divorce, and divorce for the sake of marriage.

Witness the daily contracts, in which regular provision is made for these disgraceful contingencies. I shall not speak of the wound that is inflicted on national morals by the frequency of their recurrence ; for, such is now the facility of communication, that the tide of immorality flows through a thousand channels, and soon penetrates from the highest region into the remotest creeks of society. If we were to judge from observation, we could not believe that we lived in a Christian country. In the days of school-boy innocence, our belief and our delicacy are equally shocked at the pictures of the Roman satirist.† Soon, however, the experience of age subdues the virtuous scepticism of youth ; we see, in the licentiousness of the times, the most faith-

* *Exeunt matrimonii causa nubunt divortii.* Seneca, *De Benef.* l. 3.

† As an instance of our retrocession to the good old times of Seneca and Juvenal, I might mention the fantastic plan of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, who recommended a bill in Parliament, septennial in its operation, for the benefit of married persons. Your Grace will surely smile at the ludicrous licentiousness of the project. However, I have no doubt but it would be as acceptable to many individuals of the present day, as the law of Moses. See Spence's *Anecdotes of Books and Men*. London, 1820.

ful comment on his writings, and are taught to absolve the heaviest strokes of his pencil from the charge of exaggeration. We behold the same shameful vicissitudes of marriage and divorce which marked the degeneracy of Rome, and may confirm our opinion of the baneful influence of the Protestant doctrine, in the words of an eminent Protestant Historian. "A specious theory is confuted by this free and perfect experiment, which demonstrates that the liberty of divorce does not contribute to happiness and virtue."

What is then, my Lord, the prolific source of these abuses?

Unde hæc monstra tamen vel quo de fonte requiris?

or what can stay the progress of immorality, while the doctrine of divorce is unsettled, and abandoned to the licentiousness of every interpreter? The Catholic doctrine on the indissolubility of marriage is the only remedy, a doctrine that is already incorporated with the common law of England. Startle not, my Lord, at such a proposition. Some of the ministers of the Establishment have gone farther, and recommended a reconciliation with the Catholic Church. Alarmed at the defection that is daily thinning the ranks of the Establishment, they have seen no hopes of subordination except in such an

alliance. Nay, the union of the Churches occupied much of the attention of your predecessor Archbishop Wake, who, had he lived to witness the dreadful progress of sectarianism, would doubtless have pushed his overtures with greater zeal, and perhaps with greater success. You may dread that the Archiepiscopal throne of Canterbury would be overshadowed by the amplitude of St. Peter's, and gradually shorn of its splendours. No, my Lord, it would borrow fresh lustre from such a junction. Such were heretofore the fears of some aspiring Prelates, whose ambition made them impatient of the supremacy of Rome. But scarcely did they try the fatal experiment of separation, when they found that the effulgence of their thrones was only reflected. This train of thought naturally reminds me of Bishop Butler, another ornament of the Establishment. You know with what ingenuity he traced the analogy between natural and revealed religion, and discovered some resemblances between physical and moral truth. However, had not his prejudices arrested his speculations, he might have discovered in the condition of his own Church another illustration of this striking analogy. Loosened from the centre of unity, her motions are capricious and irregular: unfed by any accession of light from the fountain, her

original stock is constantly diminishing ; and like a distant star, still receding from the centre, she casts her lone and waning splendour ; gradually deepening into that sort of twilight, which teems with wayward phantoms more than utter obscurity, and which, though too feeble to light the way, is still sufficient to make the darkness visible.

HIEROPHILOS.

LETTER XIX.

Πέμπτας δ' ἐξαλεαςθαί, ἐπεὶ χαλεπαὶ τε καὶ αἰναί,

Ἐν πέμπτῃ γάρ φασὶν Ἑριννύιος ἀμφιπολυεῖν,

Ὅρχον τίννυμενας τὸν Ἑρὶς τέκε πῆμ' ἐπιόρκοις.—HESIOD.

“ The fifth of every week thy care require,

“ Days full of trouble and afflictions dire.

“ For them the Furies take their round, 'tis said,

“ And heap their vengeance on the perjur'd head.”

SIR :—It may be a fanciful, yet it is a remarkable coincidence, that the day which the superstition of Hesiod denounced as ominous of discord, should be singled out for the revival of similar scenes by the pretended followers of the Gospel. Before I take my leave of a subject, to which the little time I have devoted, I can still recal without regret, I shall take the liberty of directing once more the curiosity of the public to the last meeting of the Kildare-street Association.

The last year has been to them the most eventful one since the origin of their institution. From its infancy to that period they went on rejoicing in their way, and enriched by the accumulated offerings of their converts. At length, however, a

fatal check was given to their career ; a spirit of wholesome inquiry was directed to their proceedings ; the extent of the benefits they conferred, was compared with the extent of their specious promises ; and when the opposition between both was laid open to the public, they were earnestly conjured to adopt a line of conduct more conformable to the spirit of their primitive regulations. Deaf to remonstrance, they sullenly persevered, in opposition to all that was elevated and enlightened in their assembly. And what has been the consequence of their rash and inconsiderate measures ? The alienation of many who are still of their number, and the actual desertion of some of the most dignified members, who have given their cordial support in the establishment of a new society. Of schemes of improvement of which experience does not afford means of ascertaining the utility, I must confess, I am not an enthusiastic admirer. Of the new society I know but little, nor does that little knowledge furnish sufficient data to warrant censure or commendation. Without discussing, then, the merit of the other, it will not be deemed rashness to predict that should each returning year witness a similar defection with the past, the existence of the parent institution must soon become a tale.

The expectation that was raised, and the distrust that was excited by the recent discussions,

drew to the place of meeting a full and fashionable assembly. It was imagined that the chosen champions of its fame would clear it of the charges of proselytism and mis-government, or that the more moderate would recommend an union with the schismatics. But some of the leading orators of last year, either ashamed of its bigotry, or content with the celebrity which they obtained in the cause of the Gospel, resigned the theatre to a crowd of less efficient but equally zealous advocates. The uniformity of talent displayed by the successive speakers, happily spares me the necessity of irritating the jealousy of some, or distressing the modesty of others, by any invidious selection. I must except, however, Dr. —, of Trinity College, on whose mind a strong light seems to have broken through some secret crevices which has not yet penetrated the dull medium, nor reached the other members of the university. With the buoyancy of genius, he has risen above the pressure, and resisted the contagion of its atmosphere—for

His delights

Are Dolphin like, they shew his back above

The element they live in.

Yet neither the wisdom of Lord Cloncurry, nor of Dr. —, could overcome the inveterate prejudices of the members; and when their overtures for conciliation were rejected, like Camil-

lus, they retired, perhaps, murmuring an indignant prophecy that the society would soon solicit, in the wisdom of its reverse, the councils which it rejected in the infatuation of its prosperity.

Why the members of this society adhere with such stubborn pertinacity to their system, it is difficult to conjecture. They know that the society was founded for the education of the poor; they know that the majority of that class comprehends Catholics: and yet with the most insulting mockery they proffer them education, on conditions which they well know cannot be accepted. Why refuse to entrust the education of the Catholics to those who convey to them the morality of the Gospel, without any mixture of fanaticism, teaching, them a patient endurance of their sufferings and inculcating an allegiance, not the calculating and conditional allegiance which rests on no secure principle, but an allegiance founded on conscience and enforced by the Apostle. Circumstances are daily arising which demand some alterations in their laws, and still they refuse to yield to them. Really such perverse opposition to the dictates of sound policy cannot be explained, unless by supposing that its founder, like the Legislator of Sparta, had bound the members by oath to the observance of its laws, and that then by an heroic artifice he sacrificed himself to the perpetuity of his institutions. Else how could they

in the face of the world with all the affectation of sincerity and solemnity of declamation applaud their own exertions, which, it is well known, must be confined to a limited sphere, or idly wasted in unproductive activity? They may ascribe the reluctance of Catholics to prejudice or superstition. I have in my former letters sufficiently vindicated on that head their tenets and their practice. And those who amuse themselves at the expense of their piety, would doubtless laugh at the timid scruples of Eleazor, who refused life when it could not be preserved without a violation of the law.

There was one too who declaimed long and loud on the absurdity of withholding the scriptures in the nineteenth century! The old maxim of *laudator temporis acti* is reversed, and instead of the silly prattle which the dignity of age might render tolerable, however tedious, we are stunned with an incessant panegyric on our own times. The progress of mind in the nineteenth century is indeed a favourite theme, nor is it difficult to perceive, in the complacency of the orators, that they fancy they have had a large share in producing the general illumination. Full of their Eutopian theories, it is in vain that the picture of history is placed before them. Occupied in the contemplation of a groupe, in which them-

selves form, doubtless, prominent figures, the most colossal forms of the past retire into diminutive and almost indiscernible perspective. Had they bestowed, however, a little attention on the comparison, they would discover that the sickly tapers of the present century would wink before the broad effulgence of the ages that are gone by. To reason with such minds, incurably seized with the love of system, is a hopeless task. You may convince them by argument of the inutility of their plan, but still, on account of some secret interest, you cannot persuade them to its rejection.

“ For when disputes are worn out,

“ ’Tis interest still resolves the doubt.”

Yet it is consistent enough, that the Protestants would talk of the improvements of their religion. The Catholics do not claim any such merits; and while every other system is corrected or disfigured by time, it is their glory, that the faith of their church is independent of its contributions. Those who pretend to be so familiar with the Scripture, cannot but recollect the earnest solicitude with which St. Paul exhorts Timothy to avoid any communion with those whose discourse creepeth like a cancer, tainting whatever it touches, until it spreads a general infection. Now it will be readily conceded, that the world daily teems with

men designated by the character of St. Paul, however people may differ about its application. Hence the Catholics only act in obedience to the injunction of the Apostle, in reprobating a system of education which, by confounding every sect, would conceal from them the contagious portion which he cautions them to avoid ; and thus lead them into deadly errors, under the semblance of an undefinable Christianity. Those who have heard the smooth, and flattering, and plausible language that was spoken at the Kildare-street Meeting, may be surprised at the severity with which I have animadverted on their conduct. With no small share of confidence in the sincerity of my species, I am warranted in applying to that Society the maxim—

Fronti nulla fides.

Their conduct, not their language, is the safest criterion of ascertaining their object. Whoever, then, wishes to know the moderation of the Biblemen, let him learn it in the vexatious tyranny to which some of the peasantry are subjected, rather than at a public meeting, where every thing is calculated to produce a transient illusion. On witnessing how the concord, to which the jarring members of such meetings are attuned by the sounds of eloquence and charity, is almost dissolved on their dispersion, I am

reminded of the fabled theatre of Orpheus, where beasts and birds, wild and tame, soothed by the charms of music, forgot their savage instincts; but, as soon as the magic of song had ceased, they suddenly awoke to discord, and resumed the ferocity of their natures.

HIEROPHILOS.

LETTER XX.

*Turnus ut infractos adverso Marte Latinos
Defecisse videt, sua nunc promissa reposci,
Se Signari oculis: ultrò implacabilis ardet
Atollitque animos:—*VIRGIL.

When Turnus saw the Latins quit the field,
Their armies broken, and their courage quelled,

.....
He roused his vigour for the late debate,
And raised his haughty soul to meet his fate.—DRYDEN.

SIR :—If it should excite surprise that I have listened so long to the haughty complacency of my former antagonist, my silence is a proof that the desire of writing never engaged Hierophilos in that controversy. While the work of discord was going forward among the preachers of charity and peace, I looked on with silent satisfaction, resolved to await the issue of their intestine divisions. Though challenged to the contest, I saw in the defiance an insidious design to create a diversion among the pious combatants, and was therefore determined that no provocation should shake my resolution of maintaining a cautious neutrality. I could, therefore, forgive Bibliophilos

the indulgence of an illusion, which mistook a retreat for a victory; I had some toleration in store for his high commendation of his own prowess; nor would I refuse to swell the testimony of his worth by the praise which the sage of Ithaca bestowed on the sinewy Ajax :—

“ Famed be thy tutor; and thy parts of nature
 “ Thrice famed, beyond, beyond all erudition;
 “ But he that disciplined thy arms to fight,
 “ Let Mars divide eternity in twain,
 “ And give him half:——”

The sacred warriors have at length disappeared, and, to be serious, I must acknowledge the justness of the claims of Bibliophilos, who ascribes to himself the merit of their dispersion. While I regret that the public has not been edified a little longer by the pious secrets* of the Society, I

* Those who have read the *Patriot* during the last two months, need not be informed of the covert designs and pious frauds of the Societies. One of its correspondents has supplied us with the valuable information, that many of the members have, at the public expense, supplied their families with the Scriptures in gilt morocco, in order, I suppose, that the young and thoughtless, who could not relish the dullness of the book, might be attracted to its perusal by the decorations of the binding. He has also pointed out other circuitous little channels, into which the stream of lucrative devotion is diverted, before it reaches its destined object—the instruction of the poor. I shall not dwell on the indecency of females abandoning the duties and privacy of domestic life, carried away amidst the stir and bustle of enthusiasm, and drawing over the faithful into the conventicles of the elect, by

cannot but applaud the talents of the man whose criticism has brushed away those dark productions, which, while they spread the spirit of discord, discoloured the face of literature. But, after all, Bibliophilos is perhaps too fastidious. With a taste sensitive to the most delicate beauties, and an ear attuned to the finest cadences of language, he cannot endure any composition that has not been cast in classic mould. Why, however, refuse to any individual the right of using the sort of weapons with which nature has furnished him? The caustic severity of Bibliophilos against the writers of the *Patriot* may then be softened by the reflection, that necessity called for their interference. And to withhold one's aid when his cause is attacked because his writings cannot minister to the luxury of learning, would be betraying the folly of him who would refuse to

offering their profound commentaries on the epistles of St. Paul. But, though it may not rank among their secrets, yet every thinking man must perceive how dangerous it is to the interests of society, to suffer its peace to be scared by those itinerant apparitions, who, with the most sepulchral hollowness of tone, and the most doleful longitude of aspect, are stalking in mid-day through our streets and highways, shrieking out the apostrophes of Isaias on the guilt and fall of Babylon, and piously applying them to the Protestant establishment. Ashamed of the disclosure of these tales, their authors have at length retired to secrecy,—but in vain; no artifice can conceal the deformity of a system, which the indiscretion of its own advocates has bared to public view.

repulse the assaults of an enemy, because he had not studied the tactics of Vegetius, nor learned to draw up his forces in the classic disposition of the Roman column or the Macedonian phalanx.

While the minds of the advocates of the Bible Societies seemed pervious to persuasion, I undertook to demonstrate the folly and danger of their projects. But the disease has since grown so inveterate, that argument would seem now but a feeble remedy; and the change which time has wrought in the tone of their members, furnishes a practical illustration of the truth of my predictions. I should, therefore, hail the appearance of a writer, who, in the face of the Established Church, has put forth, in such a strong point of view, the principles by which the Bible Societies are supported, if I did not tremble for their consequences. Unable to oppose the force of his arguments, the champions of the Church have retreated to the secure hold of authority. But the irresistible reasoning of Bibliophilos has followed them there, resolved not to spare even the bulwarks of the Establishment, should they be opposed to the impetuous current of his opinions. Such is the obvious drift of his own language. In his second letter to the Primate of Armagh, after other passages, too plain to be mistaken, he writes, "In the controversies which have arisen on the subject, far more anxiety has been expressed

by the champions of the Church for the preservation of the Establishment than the Bible. It is to be hoped that both may be secured ; but should their separate interests be found, at any time, incompatible, what honest man could hesitate upon the choice of evils?"

I may be allowed to congratulate the writer and the public upon this candid avowal of his sentiments. The spirit of fanaticism must have been fermented to a high degree, when it could have worked up to the effusion of such ardent language the cool and philosophic mind of Bibliophilos. Lest, however, it should be imagined that these opinions are peculiar to him, I could cite passages of similar import from the writers of the *Patriot*, did I not dread to disgrace my letter by their insertion. Is it not, therefore, evident that the Bible-distributors, secure of their own strength, disdain to disguise any longer the hostility of their purpose? Panting for the riches, they are rushing forward to hasten the downfall of the Establishment, and to proclaim, in the numbness that has seized its members, the approach of its dissolution. Their designs, now that they are revealed to the world, must be met on the part of the Church by a temperate yet vigorous exercise of authority. The Bishops of Armagh and Dublin have given an example befitting the

dignity and responsibility of their station. It is to be hoped that others shall soon be awakened to a similar sense of the danger, and to an imitation of their example. The consistency of the conduct of their Lordships, or of the authority which they exercise, it is surely not incumbent on me to vindicate. But the question is now a question of policy, and not of religious controversy ; and there is no friend of peace who would not rather witness the inconsistencies of quiet and good order, than the tragic, however consistent, consequences of an unbridled license of opinion. The Bible Societies are become deaf as adders' ears to the whispers of persuasion ; the voice of argument would no longer be heard in the noise of their fanaticism ; and hence the necessity of some more powerful agent, to calm the roar and stay the fury of the agitated Sectaries.

It is, then, high time to desist from unmeaning panegyric on the inestimable advantages of the Bible. Let experience answer whether these societies have realized the prophetic visions of their first and most fervent eulogists. Have they plucked a single evil out of the mass of human misery ? No.—The members may continue to meet at stated periods, and feed the credulity of the public with the marvellous history of their spiritual exploits. Their orators

may then come forward and pour out their cold and vapid ecstasies before an assembly prepared to second the pious labourings of the spirit, by seasonable interruptions of tumultuous applause. What is the amount of all this declamation? Why, that they have, in the progress of a few years, distributed so many hundred thousand copies of the Scriptures. Can a greater deceit be practised on the public mind, than to persuade it that the spirit of God has been diffused, because numberless copies of the lifeless volume have been circulated? Let all the rhetorical exaggerations of the speakers be mathematically true—it only proves the melancholy conclusion of such a waste of public money. A portion of that money would do much to alleviate the misery now felt by the humbler classes of our people, and, perhaps, prevent some of those excesses over which piety must weep. But what benefits have the Bible Societies conferred on our wretched peasantry? They may distribute their Bibles until doom's-day; their efforts will be still as unprofitable as the labours of Sisyphus. One solitary reflection ought to cure the fever of fanaticism, or at least guard the public against the further progress of its contagion. Though the Associations have toiled for years at the godly

work, and flung millions of Bibles through the mass of society, have they not all sunk like useless lumber to the bottom, while not a portion of their spirit has rested on its surface, to move over the waters and still the troubled elements?

HIEROPHILOS.

LETTER XXI.

"Sed hoc non concedo, ut quibus rebus gloriemini in vobis, easdem in aliis reprehendates."—CICERO PRO LIGARIO.

"It cannot be allowed that men should censure in others a line of conduct, which receives a sanction from their own practice and panegyric."

IN concluding these letters, it may not be useless to direct the public attention to an occurrence which has lately called forth some invidious observations on the spirit of religious proselytism.

The conversion of Miss Loveday to the Catholic faith has provoked the zeal of some of our modern journalists, who vie with each other in their animadversions on a daughter who seemed dead to every impulse of filial affection. Any interference with the faith which Protestants have inherited from their fathers, they qualify with the harsh epithet of seduction; and the profession of the Catholic creed they stigmatize as a dissolution of the tenderest ties of nature, and an undutiful renunciation of the parental authority.

The Catholic religion is immediately characterized with the polite epithet of superstitious, and the conviction it engenders is converted into the

terrors of a weak and gloomy imagination. Even these establishments which piety has erected for the protection of female virtue, are not safe against their harsh insinuations. Instead of inveighing against these holy institutions, our gratitude should applaud that benevolence, which founded those asylums where virtue may be shielded against the dangerous seductions of life, or where the feelings experienced by sensitive minds on a sudden reverse of fortune may be soothed into resignation by the consolations of religion. All these advantages are overlooked when balanced against the interest of the Protestant religion. The example of Miss Loveday is held up as a salutary warning against the dangers of perversion; and so intense is the sympathy felt for the misfortunes of the father and the child, that I doubt not but the pious sisters of the Bible Societies will celebrate an annual festival to bewail the virginity of the daughter of Jephthe.

Yet these people, whom the conversion of one individual has seized with such alarm, can behold with indifference or satisfaction the efforts that are daily making to pervert the young minds of Catholic children. The exertions of the Bible Societies are a topic of unwearied commendation; nor do the unworthy means to which they resort ever draw forth an expression of resentment. Fathers have in this country been literally turned

out of their little cot-acres, because they refused to expose their children to the peril of apostacy; and not a word of sympathy for the lot of these creatures, whose consciences are exposed to such violent trials, escaped the lips of those, who express such pious horror at the seduction of Miss Loveday. Such conduct is surely not equitable, and I know no reason for its justification, unless by supposing it more criminal to retain people in the ancient faith, than to draw them over from that faith to the conventicles of modern sectaries.

Their conduct reminds me of the facetious fable of La Fontaine, in which the beasts assembled before Jupiter, blind to their own, expose each others deformities with malignant penetration :

“ *Mais parmi les plus fous*

“ *Notre espèce excella; car tout ce que nous sommes,*

“ *Lynx envers nos pareils et taupes envers nous*

“ *Nous nous pardonnons tout, et rien aux autres hommes.*”

Of all the charges preferred by the advocates of the Bible, there is none that has been more insidiously put forward, than that its indiscriminate perusal is prohibited by the Clergy, lest it should weaken their own influence, and unmask their imposture. Experience sufficiently exposes the weakness of the charge: for surely there is little danger to be apprehended in trying any

system of Christianity by the Bible, from which, if we are to judge by the different creeds of its advocates, the most opposite systems may be extracted. The objection, however ingenious, is not new; it has been pressed by the sectaries of every age, and its futility cannot be more forcibly exposed than in the language of St. Augustine :

“ You know,” says this holy and enlightened man, writing to Honoratus, “ that the sole cause which engaged me in the party of the Manicheans was their boastful promise not to check their followers by the restraint of a severe authority; but to free them from error, and lead them to God by the simple method of reason. For what other motive could have prompted me to despise the religion of my education, and to listen to those men with such avidity, but their having charged the Catholics with frightening, by superstition, the members of their religion, and exacting the acquiescence of faith unfortified by argument. They, however, required none to believe until the understanding was gradually enlightened by the knowledge of truth. Who should not have been vanquished by such specious promises? and will any one be astonished that they made a deep impression on the mind of a young man fond of truth, when his disputes and conferences with the learned had rendered

inquisitive and presumptuous?" And again (for there is a sad interest in transcribing his ingenuous and pathetic description of the weakness and vanity of man), "the soul is naturally flattered with the promises which heretics make of pointing out clearly the truth. It reflects not on its own weakness, nor on the sad state into which it has been plunged by its own infirmity, Hence while she hungers for wholesome food, which can only be profitable to the healthy, she perishes by the poisoned doctrine of her deceivers."

It requires no extraordinary stretch of ingenuity to apply the words of St. Augustine to the circumstances of our own times. The boastful promises of the advocates of the Bible are the same by which his young and unsuspecting mind was betrayed. Such is their tone of triumph, such their pretensions to the exclusive possession of the truth, and such the insulting pity with which they affect to treat the religion of Catholics. The proud are flattered by the compliment paid to their understanding, and the profligate hail the introduction of a spirit which releases them from an inconvenient yoke.

Free in the choice of their teachers, they attach themselves to one until he is supplanted by another, who yields in his turn to the bolder pretensions of a more artful and accominodating

rival; and thus to escape the despotism of authority, they pass under the successive dominion of a crowd of enthusiasts, who rise and disappear, until in their endeavours to realize the progressive perfectibility of our nature, they drink the deadliest errors that ever poisoned the human mind.

We are frequently told, by way of triumphant contrast, that the Bible is the religion of Protestants. By such frequent appeals to Scripture, they would fain insinuate that they have an exclusive veneration for the sacred volume. They seldom reflect, that it is revered by the Catholic Church as the sacred charter of her privileges. But though it be originally her possession, it is one of those possessions that may be plundered by every apostate who deserts her communion. It is one of those badges by which the true Church is ludicrously personified in the mimic exhibition of the sectaries.

Behold, however, the awful consequences of this principle. When I am told that the Bible is the religion of Protestants, the word *Protestant* presents an idea of such unbounded and intricate meaning, that I must confess it is difficult to comprehend its extent, or unravel its perplexity. The Protestant religion must be true, as the Bible is its sole rule of faith. A member of the Church of England must, therefore, be right, because

the Bible is his rule of faith, and he is a Protestant. The Presbyterian must be right, because the Bible is his rule of faith, and *he* is a Protestant. The Socinian, who shakes the pillars of Revelation, must be right, because the Bible is his rule of faith, and *he* is a Protestant. The Antinomian, who piously absolves his followers from the obligation of the Evangelical law, must of course be right, because the Bible is his rule of faith, and *he* is a Protestant. And thus while infidelity and Popery lie at the opposite extremes, inaccessible to her influence, Truth, with the variety of aameleon and the velocity of lightning, beams on each chequered and deformed system that fills up the immense interval.

Having brought these letters to a conclusion, I shall now resign the further discussion of the interesting subjects they involve. I trust I have contributed something to the vindication of our country and our religion, against the libellers of both ; and if I have, I shall reflect with some satisfaction on those hours, which have been devoted to a subject that has cheered the labour, and relieved the uniformity of stated duties.

On a topic in which the name of Ireland had so frequently occurred, it was difficult, perhaps, to forbear from the introduction of sad and irritating recollections. Seldom is the state of Ire-

land discussed with calmness ; and of her we may truly say, that her annals, instead of presenting the uniform dignity of historical narrative, partake of all the irregular alternations of poetry, now depressed into the saddest strains of its elegy, and again exalted into the high-toned tension of its most tragic numbers.

I have, therefore, cautiously abstained from reviving these disagreeable topics, which, as it is the duty, it should be the endeavour of all to bury in forgetfulness. History, though one of the noblest sources of moral and political wisdom, may yet be abused to the worst of purposes. I have, therefore, endeavoured to keep in view the maxims of a great statesman, conveyed in the following eloquent language, and which I might recommend as a useful guide in the study and application of history :

“ In history a great volume is unrolled for our instruction, drawing the materials of future wisdom from the past errors and infirmities of mankind. History, one of the richest sources of wisdom, may, in the perversion, serve for a magazine, furnishing offensive and defensive weapons for parties in church and state, and supplying the means of keeping alive or reviving dissensions and animosities, and adding fuel to civil fury. Wise men will apply the remedies to vices,

not to names,—to the causes of evil which are permanent, not to the occasional organs by which they act, and to the transitory modes in which they appear: otherwise you will be wise historically, a fool in practice. Different ages have different fashions in their pretexts and modes of mischief. Wickedness is inventive, and always adopts the most popular and pleasing form, to hide its own deformity. Sometimes religion becomes its agent, and sometimes liberty; but it always associates itself with that which is in highest estimation. And thus the spirit of mischief transmigrates through successive ages, and far from losing its principle of life, by the change of its appearance, it is renovated in its new organs with a fresh vigour of a juvenile activity. It walks abroad, it continues its ravages, while you are gibbetting the carcass or demolishing the tomb. It is thus with those who, attending only to the shell and husk of history, think they are waging war with intolerance, pride, and cruelty; whilst under colour of altering the principles of antiquated parties, they are feeding the same vices in different factions, and, perhaps, worse."

Such is the language of Edmund Burke, whose name shall always be pronounced with reverence by the virtuous and the wise, whom Ireland shall ever number among the most gifted of her sons,

the vastness of whose political wisdom, not content with shielding the hearths, and throne, and altars of his country, against a demoralizing and revolutionary infidelity, comprehended within its grasp the cliency of the opposite hemispheres, and whose eloquence, which shook the appalling phalanx of domestic faction, was heard to roll its distant thunder across the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean.

HIEROPHILOS.

THE END.

PRINTED BY KEATING AND BROWN, DUKE STREET,

GROSVENOR SQUARE.

the virtues of whose political wisdom, not only
but such shielding the people, and throne and
state of his country, against a devastating and
revolutionary rebellion, comprehended within its
range the interests of the opposite political
and social classes, which shook the very
foundations of domestic peace, was held to roll its
distant thunder across the Atlantic and the Indian

Ocean.

A

BRIEF REPLY

TO THE

CHARGE

OF

HIS GRACE WM. MAGEE,

ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

1

WILLIAM WAGLE

CHARGE

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BRIEF REPLY

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ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN

LONDON

1852

A
BRIEF REPLY
TO THE
CHARGE
OF
HIS GRACE WILLIAM MAGEE,
ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN;
IN
TWO LETTERS:
THE FIRST, EMBRACING HIS GRACE'S CHARGE;
THE SECOND, HIS COMMENTARIES.

BY HIEROPHILOS,

SECOND EDITION,
REVISED AND CORRECTED BY THE AUTHOR.

LONDON:

Printed and Published by KEATING and BROWN,
38, Duke Street, Grosvenor Square, and at
24, Bartlett's Buildings, Holborn.

1823.

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TO THE READER.

THE two following letters are devoted to the ungrateful task of repelling the heavy charge, and refuting the erroneous assertions of an exalted dignitary of the Establishment. It was a matter of just surprise, that a prelate whom superior learning was supposed to have elevated to his present dignity, could give utterance to the language which was contained in his published address, and it was therefore expected that Dr. Magee would have made some atonement to the Catholic body for such wanton and unprovoked aggression. But instead of attempting to heal the feelings which he wounded by his Charge, the notes with which he has fortified it are calculated to irritate them more; and, like the Roman leader, having once plunged into the fatal flood, though the meek and majestic form of Religion forbad him to advance, his wayward courage has impelled him to go onward.

It is not without reluctance that Hierophilos has ever engaged in controversy; nor should he still be excited by slight and ordinary provocation. But there are occasions on which forbear-

ance would cease to be a virtue, and to remain silent under the grave accusation of an Archbishop, might be construed into an acquiescence in the justness of the impeachment.

The remarks which are here offered on the Doctor's Charge, His Grace will take as a compliment to his dignity, as well as an answer to his arguments. Had these arguments come from another quarter, they would have been perfectly harmless, unless through the imprudence of a reply. But bodies gather weight as they descend; and observations, light in their own nature, acquire force when coming from persons placed on such lofty elevation. An individual filling so important a station in society as Doctor Magee, is unquestionably entitled to respect: but as he has been the aggressor, he will not surely claim an exemption from the laws of just and honourable reprisals. And if the issue of the controversy proves to be such as to excite the regret of the friends of the establishment, they will recollect that the Archbishop of Dublin has first flung down his gauntlet; and that, by courageously staking the chance of victory, he has cheerfully courted the alternative of defeat.

It is not without reluctance that Hierophiles has ever engaged in controversy; nor should he still be excited by slight and ordinary provocations. But there are occasions on which forbear-

strengthening your claims to the one, you must
have consented to risk every pretension to the
other. Your Charge is calculated to excite a
TO
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may regret, you cannot retract.

WILLIAM MAGEE, D.D. &c.

your Lordship's Charge, which, though you
may regret, you cannot retract.
ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

Diligite homines, interficite errores.—ST. AUGUSTINE.

Love the man, chastise his errors.

MY LORD:—The name and title of the Archbishop of Dublin, necessarily give a circulation and authority to your Grace's Charge; to which, from its own intrinsic merit, it could never have been entitled. The weight and influence of the body against which its principal force was directed, must still augment its interest, and add to its claims on public attention. While you meditated so severe an attack against the Catholic Religion, you must doubtless have calculated its probable consequences. Had your Grace been content with the quiet enjoyment of the dignity, to which your merit or good fortune had exalted you, you might have enjoyed the reputation of learning and liberality. But by your late intrepid aggression, you submitted to have both impartially canvassed; and though you probably imagined you were

strengthening your claims to the one, you must have consented to risk every pretension to the other. Your Charge is calculated to excite a sensation through the country, which, though you may regret, you will not be able to control ; and whatever may be its influence on the repose of your Lordship's mind, it requires not the spirit of prophecy to predict that your address will not contribute much to your reputation with the public.

It has been foretold, my Lord, that in latter times charity would grow cold, and faith would not be found among men. As the first part of the prophecy has been pretty clearly fulfilled, your Grace evinces a becoming zeal to shield yourself against the application of the other : and it is remarkable, that the slightest sound of danger to the faith, has aroused the slumbering warders of the gates of the holy places, whose hearts could never yearn to the tenderest cries of charity. Yet we are told in Scripture, that to “ visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation is religion undefiled before God,” unless with the apostolic reformer of your church, you rank the epistle of St. James among the apocryphal writings.

Some individuals felt, or affected to feel, surprise at the tenour of your late Charge, as if it had been at variance with those principles which you early professed. Imagining they could discover something of liberality in your former

writings, they would fain lament your apostacy by characterizing it in the language of the poet,

Lowliness is young Ambition's ladder,
Whereto the climber-upward turns his face;
But when he once attains the upmost round,
He then unto the ladder turns his back;
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
By which he did ascend.

Yet, my Lord, the charge of inconsistency could only arise from ignorance of your recorded principles; for had the work on atonement been read by those who are loud in its commendation, they would have discovered there occasionally the same superficial sophistry, and the same intolerant tone that have so strongly marked your late production. I shall, therefore, my Lord, give you full credit for consistency, rather than expose you to the invidious charge of turning your back upon those principles by which you were conducted, and on those persons by whom you were cheered in your ascent to elevation.

In alluding to the work which, I am told, is the pillar on which you would fain rest your reputation as a scholar, I mean not to contest your claims to erudition. But there is an erudition which bespeaks more of a passive than an active mind, displaying a laudable industry in the collection of its materials, without any of that quality by which they are transmuted into a new form. Even among those who have obtained the reputa-

tion of scholars, there are some who are indebted to the force of contrast for their fame : whose learning is thought solid, because it is clumsy and inelegant—whose stock of knowledge is deemed ample, because there is a carelessness in the manner of expending it—who are estimated as profound, because a single ray of genius never lit their lucubrations ; and who, to use a metaphor with which your Grace cannot be offended, are covered with the slough of learning, without ever shining with its brilliancy.

That the Archhishop of Dublin should have been under the influence of the corporate spirit of his order, cannot excite our wonder. But that in the exercise of your zeal you should have forgotten the dictates of prudence, is a circumstance that has given rise to conjectures as different as some of them are injurious to your Lordship's candour. But I shall not entertain for a moment such unworthy suspicions, but submit to all the difficulties involved in the conviction of your sincerity, rather than suppose it could have been your Grace's intention, by the vehemence of your charge, to multiply the enemies and thicken the embarrassments of the Establishment.

No, my Lord, whatever of acrimony there was in your Grace's Charge, I am willing to attribute to the difficulty of your Grace's situation. The generous ambition of illustrating in your own example the wisdom of preferring personal merit to

the dull pretensions of superior age or dignity, could alone have induced you to hazard those dangerous topics of controversy, which it were the interest of the Establishment never to see revived. Else, how could you in the face of a Catholic country put forth such claims to continuity of succession, while the inanimate objects by which you were surrounded spoke your refutation?

That in England, where the ancient religion has been almost extinguished with the abolition of those monuments that could still preserve its memory, some prelates might work themselves up to an illusion that they are the heirs of the apostles, is a circumstance which cannot excite our astonishment. And hence we only smile at the harmless effusions of those contented prelates, whom family influence has seated upon their episcopal thrones, and who disturb not the placid tenour of their lives by any laborious and painful inquiries. But that in a country whose very soil is interspersed with the traces of the ancient worship, and whose ancient hierarchy still exists in pure and apostolic splendour, the bishop of a new church should put forth such high pretensions to apostolicity, bespeaks a hardihood of mind in which humility had no share.

I fancied that the time had long since gone by, when the claims of "*Catholic and Apostolic*" were abandoned to Catholic theologians. Like the doctrine of legitimacy, which is exploded, while

there are any old claimants to the throne, the doctrine of Apostolicity was derided by your predecessors, while the rights of the old succession were fresh in every mind. But in proportion as they are forgotten, the claims of those who were substituted in their stead are gradually ripening, and their arguments shifting their ground, until at length you would fain represent in your own person the fulness of that apostolic authority, on the extinction of which, whatever you possess, was originally founded.

This position might be clearly established. But without entering on any tedious theological discussion, we know enough of history to ascertain what little value was set by your predecessors on episcopal consecration. We are informed by Burnet, and Burnet was a Protestant Bishop, that the versatile Cranmer and his associates regarded the episcopacy as a mere municipal function, to be exercised, or resigned, or resumed, according to the extent of the royal pleasure. And surely the anecdote of Elizabeth threatening to unfrock one of her prelates, and the edifying meekness with which he bore the royal indignity, affords no strong instance of those claims to apostolicity, so haughtily put forth by our modern prelates.

Let us, my Lord, ascend to that period when the apostolical series began to diverge into two branches. So far the most illiterate can be the companion of our way. Here, however, we must

separate: for thus far thou canst go, and no farther; appalled by the hideous avulsion of your ancestors from the parent trunk, which, like the crime of the unfortunate son of Adam, has descended in visible characters to their posterity, and which, though they may be softened in the descending series, are yet too inveterate to be obliterated by time. And hence, no length of possession can consecrate the title of a bishop defective in its origin, or invest a schismatical church with the authority of prescription.

The claims of your church to catholicity are still more untenable. While it was yet in its infancy, the prophetic reformers might well have amused the credulity of their followers by predicting the future glories of the establishment. And when their hearts were depressed by the sad contrast between the vast extent of the empire of Babylon and the narrow limits to which the elect were confined, the preachers might still have re-assured their drooping hopes by pointing to the gradual expansion of the spiritual conquests of Sion. But since time has laid open the fallacy of their predictions, I fancied that the pretensions to catholicity would have been modestly resigned. The want of catholicity is a consequence of the defect of apostolicity. Severed from the parent tree, from which she drew nutriment and life, she is consigned to decay, and barrenness has come upon her. Unable, therefore, to propagate her reign,

she is doomed to a limited extent : nor will she ever be able “ to enlarge her tent, or lengthen the cords, or strengthen the stakes of her tabernacle.”

It would have been prudence, therefore, my Lord, to pause before you insulted the religious feelings of those to whom you are indebted for your splendid revenues. Disclaiming any connexion with the Catholic church, from which you derive whatever there is of dignity in your own, and spurning any connexion with your brethren of the Reformation ; do you imagine you can support their mutual opposition ? Whatever may be thought of the religion of Catholics, the fidelity with which they clung to it, through the heat of persecution, which would have dissolved less hardy virtue, should entitle them to respect. And whatever may be the form of the church of the Sectaries, they are entitled to the praise of consistency in their reformation, by having emancipated human reason from every secular control.

But what, my Lord, has your church to challenge admiration ? The Catholics have a church without a religion, and the Sectaries have a religion without a church. This, no doubt, was, in your Lordship’s opinion, one of those happy discoveries that could settle the controversy of ages, and save posterity from the repetition of these angry discussions. I have been struck with a wonderful idea of your strength, in witnessing those solemn gambols of the archi-episcopal cha-

racter, gravely disporting itself amidst the very depths of religion, poising between a puerile play of language those mysteries which our ancestors could scarcely wield, and amusing the ears with sound, instead of conveying sense to the understanding. However, my Lord, as this is one of those mysteries which ordinary minds cannot sound, I will not attempt to approach it, unless it is rendered more accessible to my intellect.

But as you are fond of defining your church by its relation to what you are politely pleased to call the church of the Romanists and the religion of the Sectaries, allow me to tell your Grace what it is, defining it by the same criterion. It is a mock church, having all the supposed inconveniences of both, without the excellence of either; exercising all the severity of the one, without the security by which it is mitigated; and shaken by all the discord of the other, without the enjoyment of its freedom.

As the vial of your invective was too full for the Catholic religion, you have spared a portion for those children, who by their rebellion to your church are only avenging that disobedience of which she first gave the example. "For thou hast taught them against thee, and instructed them against thy own head." (Jerem. 13.) Yet, my Lord, it is among those we could discover, in their full perfection, those principles which ushered in the Reformation. Among them we discover

none of the vices accompanying slothful splendour, which were the theme of the invectives of the reformers, and which, if then existing, have rather transmigrated than disappeared. Placed in that mediocrity of condition which exempts them not from the necessity of exertion, and completely depurated from the fiery spirit of the reformers, the Presbyterians have exploded the lessons of intolerance with which their infant church has been reproached, and exhibit to the world the examples of decorous and valuable citizens.

Is it wise, then, my Lord, to provoke the hostility of such a body, and to throw out imputations which must recoil upon their author, charged with the additional weight of inconsistency? Rather than force people to the manifestation of those distinctions, which must eventually shew how few are attached to your Lordship's cause, it is wiser to suffer them to wear the general uniform of Protestantism. Better imitate the wise policy of the Romans, which forbade the slaves to adopt a distinct habit, lest by becoming confident of their strength, they might endanger the peace of the empire. For if all who disbelieve the doctrines of the Establishment would wear the peculiar colours, and range under the respective standards of their creeds, the strength and number of the host of the ungodly would smite you to the heart; and, like the ancient prophet, you would be left to weep over the apostacy of the people.

But, my Lord, while you possess your ample revenues, they will, I trust, solace your griefs for the spiritual ravages committed in the fold. There is something in the dignity of the church which throws so much light around its evidence, and something in its wealth that adds so much weight to its arguments, that they can scarcely be resisted by ordinary minds. While you are the dispenser of the favours of the church, it is unnecessary for you to fatigue your own mind, or those of your hearers, with laborious argumentation. They will, doubtless, gratefully acknowledge themselves subdued by your arguments, and charmed by your eloquence; and should any symptoms of breaking off from the union of the Establishment be occasionally exhibited, its wealth will have silent but strong attractions, towards which their yielding minds will gently gravitate.

It is in vain, then, that naked and unassisted reasoning should contend against such powerful auxiliaries of truth. Let but the controversy be stript of these incumbrances; let but your arguments and mine be weighed in an equal balance, and the judgment left to its own native powers; and I pledge myself that the beam shall not tremble for a moment; but as soon as the weight by which one scale is depressed shall be removed, it shall instantly yield to the preponderance of the other.

HIEROPHILOS.

TO

WILLIAM MAGEE, D.D. &c.

ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

A deceitful balance is an abomination before the Lord, and a just weight
is His will.—PROVERBS.

My Lord:—Your Charge to your Clergy has excited a becoming interest; and if you were ambitious of celebrity, your labours are amply repaid, and your hopes are realized. My former Letter was a reply to your address, such as it was delivered or published; this will embrace your authorized edition, improved by the slow retouchings of time, and enriched by further illustrations. Though your Charge provoked the just resentment of those whose feelings were insulted, I still entertained hopes that your Grace would explain what was liable to misconstruction, and soften what was offensive. You had it still in your power to retrace your steps with dignity, and the forgiving generosity of your country would have put the obnoxious passages to the account of hasty and inaccurate publication, or to the zeal of an ardent mind, hurried by its own strength beyond the boundaries of discretion. But no: the heaviness of the Charge is still ag-

gravated by the severer harshness of the commentary; and deeming it weakness to recede, with the exception of a solitary word, you glory in being consistent. Had you been content with publishing the Charge, such as it was delivered, you would have been spared the second notice of Hierophilos. But since you have presented yourself to the public in another form, we will now examine whether the hasty zeal of the preacher has been corrected and improved by the cautious labours of the commentator.

In delaying my reply to this stage of the controversy, I have obviated the plea put forth by your Grace, of the necessity of “consulting for a name and station that should be respected, by refusing to come into familiar association” with what you are pleased to call the scurrilities of a degenerate press. On the style and temper of your Grace’s production I shall make no remark; but on a comparison, the Public will pronounce, whether Hierophilos has not deprived you of that convenient subterfuge by which exalted churchmen have often contrived to hide their weakness under the mask of their dignity.

Your Grace’s attempt to strip us of the ancient and envied name of *Catholic*, and to share in its honours, are almost unworthy of serious refutation. Never in so short a compass have I witnessed so much of that happy ingenuity which labours to reconcile contradictions. In one page

you speak as a “ sincere Protestant, and glory in giving utterance to those sentiments which a Protestant bishop should never compromise ;” and in the next, with wonderful versatility, you would fain transform yourself into a Catholic ! Thus your Grace becomes at once a Protestant and a Catholic, blending in your own person those attributes which were hitherto deemed irreconcilable. On one occasion, your stile rises to a tone of indignation against those politicians who have of late years appropriated the name of Catholics to a certain class of his Majesty’s subjects, and familiarized the public ear to its injurious misapplication. In your next Address I would respectfully caution you to speak in more measured language of the religion of politicians, lest irritated by such ingratitude, they might be disposed to prove how much you are indebted to their services for the establishment of your own.

It is not, my Lord, to the courtesy of parliamentary language that we are beholden for the name and honours of Catholic : it is derived to us from a higher source, and rests on more permanent authority. It is a name that is inscribed on the Creed of the Apostles, and which attached St. Augustine to the faith which we profess—a name which in every age marked the rights of primogeniture, distinguishing the lawful heirs from those who were excluded from the divine inheritance ;—a name which has survived the

ravages of time, and has never been lost by the true believers, nor usurped by the Sectaries. Those who were conscious of the invalidity of their claims, have often attempted to impose on the credulity of mankind by the assumption of the genuine appellation, and by affixing on the rightful heirs some opprobrious epithet. Thus it was that we were branded in this country with names which were intended to obscure our title. They, however, last no longer than the force in which they originate; and as soon as the laws that imposed the obnoxious epithets are relaxed, the most bigotted acquiesce in the justice of our pretensions. To deny us, therefore, the title of Catholics, is to deny the just connection between the name and nature of things, and to resist the current of thought and language by which each one is unconsciously borne along, as soon as the prejudice which resisted it subsides.

*Non aliter quam qui adverso vix flumine cymbam
Remigiis subigit : si brachia forte remisit
Atque illum in præceps prono rapit alveus amni.**

You acknowledge, my Lord, that the Roman Catholics are a branch of the Catholic church, but that their religion is so incrusted with rust that Protestants are obliged to exclude them from their communion!! While we admire your

* So the boat's brawny crew the current stem,
And slow advancing struggle with the stream;
But if they slack their hands or cease to strive,
Then down the flood with headlong haste they drive.

scrupulous piety, we must feel grateful for the charity of your concession. If the Roman Catholics are only a branch, I should wish to learn where is the trunk. Not, surely, the Protestant church, since it would be an unnatural metaphor to convert a recent and divided religion into the trunk, and to characterise the most ancient one that professes Christianity as one of the branches. Unable, however, to deny its antiquity, you associate it with rust to depreciate its value. It is, my Lord, an old religion, nor shall it ever boast of any ornament to its simplicity, by court- ing any connexion with the fashionable doctrines of modern times. The value of the genuine coin was sufficient to keep alive in every age the vigilance of those to whose care it was entrusted ; and if they were inclined to suffer it to rust, it has been kept polished by continual agitation. Like other precious jewels it is gathering richness from time, and it will always preserve sufficient value, to provoke the hostility of those who are excluded from its possession. Its antiquity then is its protection ; and what would have rusted baser metals, has in reality only brightened its splendour.

Do not attempt then to separate the Catholic church and the Catholic religion ; they are really inseparable terms. If we are a branch of the former, we are in possession of the latter ; and if you are excluded from the pale of the one, you are likewise shut out from the inheritance of the

other. How precious is the title of Catholic, when it is sought even by those who have abjured the Catholic faith ! How fondly do you cling to its relics, and with what complacency do you repeat its venerable name ! But, my Lord, it is only the name ; and while you are amused with the unsubstantial shadow of the establishment, you remind me of the Trojan chief who solaced his exile by feasting his eyes with the image of which the reality was gone.

Atque animum pictura pascit inani.

Content yourself, then, with the name and dignity of a Protestant bishop, nor associate with it a name which will only expose the absurdity of your pretensions. Do not attempt at the same time to be a Catholic and a Protestant bishop : for they are two things so different in substance as well as in name, that no chemistry can combine qualities so repulsive in their nature, nor logic associate terms of such different signification. Should you, however, persist in your pretensions to the name and prerogatives of Catholic, I would beg leave to remind you of the fate of the wit, who affected the dress and manners of the lord of the forest. But nature spoke through the disguise, and the ill grace with which he wore his new dignity quickly revealed the deceit to the ridicule of his companions, and earned for the cheat the just retribution of his imposture. The apologue was doubtless familiar to your earlier years, and your memory will readily

catch the recollection, nor shall Hierophilos descend to expound the moral.

To support your arguments in favour of the right of Catholic, you quote the authorities of Cranmer and Cromwell. It is really surprising that Protestants can speak of Cranmer with respect, whose name and character, in mercy to their cause, they ought to consign to oblivion—a man whose pliant faith, ever obedient to his interests, successively yielded to the most opposite impressions—who shamefully practised incontinence while he professed celibacy—who would sanction a system of morality that once excited* the virtuous indignation of a pagan audience, while his heart abjured the vows his lips had uttered; and who, like the two-faced Janus, presented opposite characters to the Protestants and Catholics of his time. As for Cromwell, most willingly do I make him over to your Grace, nor do I envy you all the support you can derive from the name of the licentious favourite of Henry, whose disgrace and death were attested by the joy of the whole nation as the just punishment of his crimes.

* Ἦγλωσε οἰωμὸν, ἡ δὲ φρεὴν ἀνωμοτος.

The poet who put this language into the mouth of Hippolytus incurred the just resentment of the Athenian people. What a pity they had not the benefit of the lessons of the reforming archbishop, whose life would have furnished the best illustration of the text of Euripides! Every member of the sentence in which I have sketched the character of Cranmer is founded on Protestant testimony.

I cannot dismiss this subject without adverting to the note in which your Grace insinuates two heavy charges against the Catholic church, by stating, that “that cannot be a true religion which prohibits the free use of the scripture, and subjects the word of God to the authority of man.” I shall not stop my reader with any complaints against the usual artifices of polemical disingenuity. The ignorance of others might be endured, and their misrepresentation disregarded ; but the qualifications of a bishop should place him equally above the influence of both. If I were not determined to give a full refutation of every part of your Grace’s Charge, I would refer you to the former letters of Hierophilos,* in which the calumnies against the Catholic church regarding the use of the scriptures, were refuted to the satisfaction, or at least to the silence, of one of the most strenuous and talented advocates of the bible. But as you will doubtless feel more pleasure in being referred to your own than to any other productions, allow me to place before your eyes the following sentence, taken from your Grace’s Charge : “ We, my brethren, are to keep clear of both extremes ; and holding the scriptures as our great charter, whilst we maintain the liberty with which Christ has made us free, we are to submit ourselves to the authority

* See 13th Letter, in which the wisdom of the conduct adopted by the church is illustrated by a striking and familiar example.

to which he has made us subject.”* After this sentence what becomes of the *free use* of the scripture, which you hold essential to the true religion? If by the “*free use*” of the scripture you only mean a “*tempered freedom*,” regulated by the authority of the church in the use and interpretation of scripture, then you adopt the doctrine of the Catholic church, and we will hail your conversion. But if by “*free use*” you mean an uncontrolled license of regulating one’s belief by the scripture and his own caprices—and mark, there is no other alternative—why, in the name of consistency, inveigh against the sectaries for asserting that “liberty with which Christ has made them free?” If the authority with which you endeavour to recal the Dissenters subjects not the word of God to the authority of man, why has the more consistent authority of the Catholic church a different effect? If the judge who expounds the law and corrects the abuse of its licentious application, can justly spurn the imputation of invading the authority of the legislature, why will the church not claiming more than the authority of a judge, be said to usurp the rights of the legislature of Heaven?

The truth is, my Lord, you stand not in need of argument. The sentence I have just quoted, of which the want of sense breaks out through the clumsy artifice of a laboured and perplexed

* Charge, p. 22.

construction, is the best evidence that you are conscious of your own embarrassment. Knowing that you could not maintain your station without the exercise of an authority, of whose inconsistency you are convinced, you endeavour to soften it by keeping up the language of the Reformation like the crafty Augustus, who, while he exercised a silent despotism over the Roman people, still affected the language of freedom, to amuse the prejudices of those who cherished the memory of the ancient commonwealth.

You tell us that the scriptures are the boasted charter of the faith of Protestants, until we are wearied with the repetition: nor is the ludicrous spectacle of the shattered fragments of that faith which the Sectaries hurl against each other, sufficient to cure their infatuation. We, too, appeal to the scripture as the great charter of our faith, but we appeal to it with reverence. We grasp no detached passages, which might appear more striking to our contracted view; but we reverence the whole as the dictates of divine inspiration; and lest we should err in adjusting the complex system of our duties by its standard, we listen with respectful docility to that guide, which after minutely surveying the whole, can best reconcile its apparent inconsistencies, and construct a balanced system of morality, by regulating the proper limits of our obligations, and assigning to the different virtues their respective proportions.

To conclude—and I intreat the attention of

every thinking Protestant, to the reflection, as it obviates that delusion which has taken strongest possession of their minds. The scriptures were never intended to be made the instrument of every blasphemer, who would fain conceal his extravagance and impiety under the mask of respect for religion. The indecent levity with which the awful concerns of religion are often treated by polemics, and the flippancy with which they abuse the scripture, would almost make one think that the scriptures were written for the vain and irreligious, as a matter of idle disputation. But the scriptures are too sacred for familiarity : nor ought the mysteries of Heaven be profanely agitated between the vain contentions of men. Placed in the sanctuary of the Catholic church, the scripture is the monument of God's covenant with his people ; it affords a proof of his presence, and a pledge of his protection. But when it is dragged out of that sanctuary by the impiety of the Sectaries, and sacrilegiously carried out to battle, it becomes like the same ark of the covenant in the hands of the hypocritical sons of Heli ; it provokes the vengeance of Heaven—it becomes the signal of their shame, and the instrument of their discomfiture.

HIEROPHILOS.

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MacHale, John,

Letters to the English people on the moral and political state of Ireland
demonstrating the inefficacy of ... Bible societies

London 1822

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